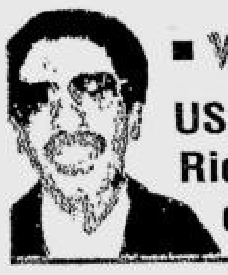

■ WORLD / A13

US comedian Richard Pryor dies at age 65

■ LIFESTYLE / C1

Fil-Am artist rediscovers roots in 'relicarios'

■ BUSINESS / B1

Gov't to privatize postal service next year

■ WORLD / A13

Miss Iceland is surprise Miss World winner

Romblon lass wins P6M in prizes in reality TV show

By Nini Valera
Entertainment

UNTIL SHE WAS PROCLAIMED THE BIG winner of "Pinoy Big Brother" on Saturday night at the Clark Expo in Pampanga, where she won P1 million in cash, PBB housemate Nene had very little money.

ROMBLON/ A20

PHILIPPINE DAILY
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Monday, December 12, 2005 ★★ 9 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 4 P18
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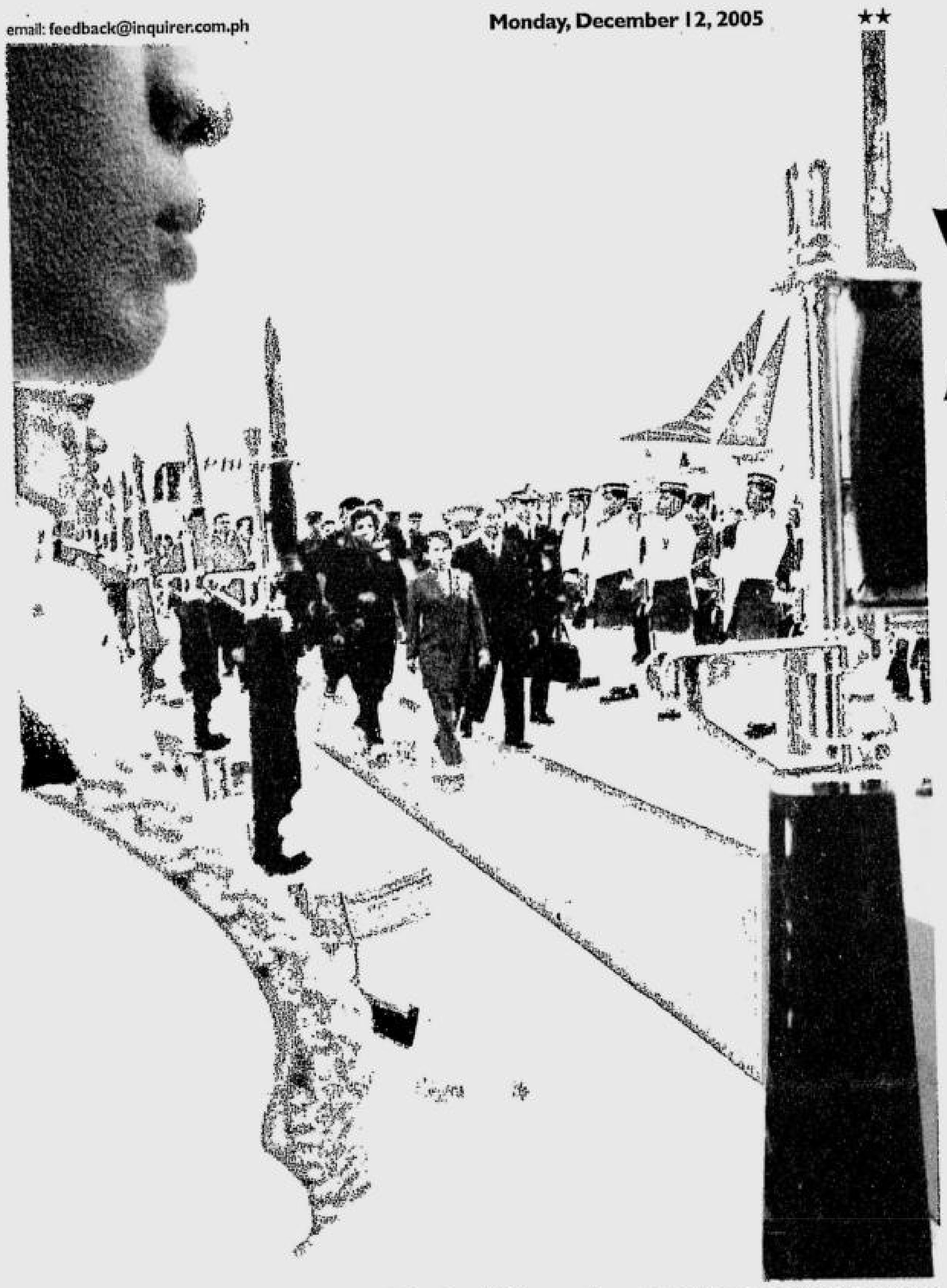
What's the capital of Burma? Military junta surprises Asean

HA? KAILANGAN PA BANG I-MEMORIZE YAN?

KUALA LUMPUR—IT was odd enough that the secretive military rulers of Burma (Myanmar) decided to move the country's capital to a remote mountain location. Even more unusual was that they

WHAT'S/ A8

Joker urges AFP: Probe wiretapping



PRESIDENT Arroyo is welcomed by top Malaysian officials upon her arrival at the Bunga Raya Complex in Kuala Lumpur to attend the two-day Asean summit, which starts today. MALACAÑANG-PCPO

'Military must clean up its own mess'

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

SAYING WIRETAPPING was a sensitive military activity that could undermine civilian authority, Sen. Joker Arroyo isn't about to let the Armed Forces off the hook as the "Hello Garci" scandal bogged down in finger-pointing and the Senate pressed demands for an inquiry.

"If spying, like wiretapping nonmilitary matters, is tolerated, the AFP can blackmail the President, legislators, the opposition and everyone else," Arroyo said in a statement yesterday.

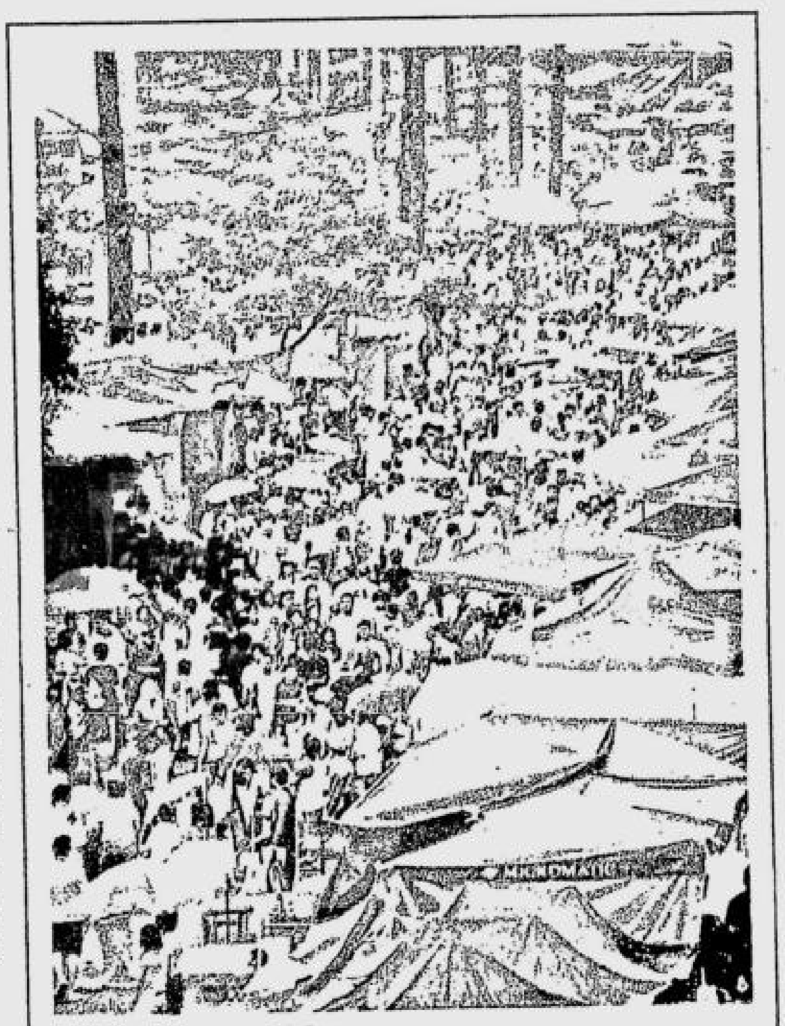
"That starts the military supremacy over civilian authority," the senator added.

Arroyo expressed disgust at the dismissal by AFP officials of his and of Senate President Franklin Drilon's demand that they answer allegations that the Intelligence Service of the AFP tapped phone conversations between President Macapagal-Arroyo and former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano and who ordered Isafp to do so.

"The AFP must conduct its own investigation, get to the bottom of this and make its findings available to Congress, the policy-making branch of the government which would review the AFP's conduct and make its own decision. The AFP must clean up its own mess," Arroyo said.

The AFP leadership was at pains yesterday to extricate itself from the wiretapping fiasco,

JOKER TELLS/ A22



SHOPPERS MECCA
Hundreds of bargain seekers crowd the flea market stalls in Divisoria, Manila, in the traditional rush to buy presents for their loved ones this Christmas. RYAN LIM

Bird flu, Suu Kyi, high oil prices top agenda of Asean summit

KUALA LUMPUR—WEIGHED down by frustrations over Burma (Myanmar), bird flu and high oil prices while seeking to forge greater economic integration with China and India, Southeast Asian leaders will start a two-day annual meeting today.

After the meeting, the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) will host the first East Asia Summit on Wednesday. The 16 participating leaders will pledge to fight bird flu.

The East Asia Summit aims for wider integration in the region, and puts Asean together with economic powerhouses China, India, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand—accounting for half the world's population and a combined economy of $8.3 trillion.

Asean comprises Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Burma, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam—a region of 530 million people and a combined economy of more than $1.4 trillion. But it accounts for just 6 percent of world exports.

A joint summit declaration will call for sharing of resources and stockpiling of drugs to fight the bird flu, Asean secretary general Ong Keng Yong said. "The important thing is that the 16 countries

BIRD/ A4

4 nations OK joint sea patrols

By Christine O. Avendaño

KUALA LUMPUR—THE PHILIPpines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei yesterday agreed to start joint sea patrols to fight terrorism and transnational crimes in their common borders, officials said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo proposed the joint patrols during a meeting with her counterparts from the other three countries on the eve of annual talks of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean).

"We are moving forward … in conducting probably joint patrols," Presidential Assistant for Mindanao Jesus Dureza told reporters here.

"It will be no longer just during military exercises but on a continuous basis so that we can protect this subregion from transnational crimes and terrorism," Dureza said.

The proposed area for patrols forms a rough circle around the Sulawesi Sea. It comprises all of Brunei; Malaysia's Sabah and Sarawak states and its federal territory of Labuan; Indonesia's Sulawesi, Maluku, Irian Jaya and Kalimantan, and Mindanao and Palawan in the Philippines.

Sabah, in particular, has been hit by numerous kidnappings in recent years, blamed on the al-

4 NATIONS/ A6

TELECOM WOES

Phone line pilferage rampant nationwide

By Juan V. Sarmiento Jr. and Clarissa S. Batino

(First of three parts)

SPECIAL REPORT

TWICE IN AUGUST AND ONCE IN July, the phone of Aling Connie Ortiz in Barangay Putatan, Muntinlupa, fell silent.

Each time, her phone was out of service for three to four days, preventing her from receiving calls from her grandchildren in Virginia, USA, and Toronto, Canada.

"We could not call them and they could not call us," an exasperated Aling Connie said.

The inconvenience she suffered pales in comparison with that of Arnold Van Vugt, a Dutch living in Cagayan de Oro City, who could not use his phone for months on end.

Vugt had to go to an Internet café in the commercial district, 7 km from his home, so he could send e-mails to kith and kin.

"For three months [starting in May], we couldn't use our phone. I was very much affected," he

PHONE/ A9

RP captures heart of young Korean missionary

CHRISTIAN ESGUERRA

HYUN Jinn Jo: Longs for Manila.

By Christian V. Esguerra

WHILE MANY DISGRUNTLED Filipinos are raring to leave their country, this young Korean missionary can't wait to book the first flight to Manila.

Hyun Jin Jo, 23, a college junior at Pukyung National University in Busan, South Korea, is just waiting for graduation before returning to the Philippines to stay in the country for good.

Her dream is to live in the countryside and experience life with the poorest Filipinos, especially the children.

"I left my heart in the Philippines," she told the INQUIRER in Busan, a city south of Seoul where she lives with her grandmother. "I think your country is very nice."

Her admiration for the Philippines was developed when she first came to the country as part of the International Youth Fellowship's short-term missionary program for students from February 2004 until January this year.

For almost a year, she went around schools and communities in and out of Metro Manila to spread the Gospel.

The program brought her to Barangay Bahay Toro in Project 6, Quezon City, where she shared a household with compatriot Pastor Nam and his wife.

Her group also organized Bible studies in Marinduque, Masbate, Mindoro and Boracay in Aklan. Judging by the people's warm response, the effort was well worth it, she said.

One success story was Junlan, a Masbate teenager who showed up at one Bible session.

His was a life that reflected a carefree lifestyle, one that seemingly lacked direction and purpose, Hyun said.

"Every day, he would just dance and sing and play with friends," she recalled. "He spent his time without meaning."

One afternoon, Hyun and her group introduced Junlan to

RP CAPTURES/ A8

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern Luzon will have cloudy skies with rainshowers. Visayds and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. Rest of Luzon will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: CHONA GALANG, PDI RESEARCH/12/12/05

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONTPAGE

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Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Mostly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Mostly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Mostly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Mostly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Mostly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Mostly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Mostly Cloudy
Calapan	Mostly Cloudy	Davao	Mostly Cloudy

SPECIAL GUEST. Vice President Noli de Castro surveys a herd of painted Guyitos, the INQUIRER's mascot, with INQUIRER chair Marixi Rufino-Prieto during the paper's 20th anniversary on Dec. 9. EDWIN BACASMAS

Filipino militants take fight to WTO in Hong Kong

By Blanche S. Rivera

HONG KONG—MANILA'S STREETS WILL be unusually quiet in the coming days. But Hong Kong's will be a lot noisier than usual.

Filipino militant leaders arrived here Sunday, passing through immigration unhindered, to join protest actions against the sixth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization to be held here on Dec. 13-18.

The Philippines' anti-WTO contingent includes Bayan Muna Representatives Satur Ocampo and Teddy Casiño, Kilusang Mayo Uno chair Elmer Labog and Courage president Ferdinand Gaite.

Eleven Indonesian, nine Cambodian and six Thai Seafish-J leaders also arrived with the RP contingent for a fluvial parade on Dec. 13.

Ninety-one Filipino protesters accounted for more than half of the 179 passengers aboard Cebu Pacific flight 5J 110 from Manila.

Sanlakas chair Wilson Fortaleza, Alyansa Agrikultura national coordinator Ernie Ordoñez and Tambuyog Development Center executive director Arsenio Tanchuling are arriving here today.

The Hong Kong Ministerial—dubbed MC6—is set to witness the biggest gathering of Filipino activists for anti-WTO protest actions since the Uruguay Round formally launched the world's biggest trade group of 148 countries in 1994.

Fisherfolk protest

The Philippine protest group includes militant fisherfolk and farmers, economic activists, lawmakers, industry players and trade experts.

More than 200 members of the Stop the New Round Coalition (SNR), a broad alliance of groups opposed to a new round of trade liberalization, are staging protest actions in Hong Kong, which is just an hour by plane from Manila.

Fisherfolk leaders from Southeast Asia and the United States arrived in Manila Thursday to link up with their partners in the Southeast Asian Fisheries Network for Justice (Seafish-J) which is led by the Philippines.

The fisherfolk came from Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, the United States, Vietnam and Malaysia. They will join 86 fisherfolk leaders from the Philippines before flying to Hong Kong on Sunday.

Another broad Philippine-led coalition, Resist WTO, is sending around 130 of its leaders to join its Hong Kong-based affiliates in the activities to coincide with the Ministerial meeting.

Both coalitions are recognized by the Hong Kong People's Alliance, the umbrella group of both local and foreign organizations coming to Hong Kong for WTO activities.

"Everyone's going to Hong Kong like it's a fiesta, but it's actually very sad," said economist Rene Ofreneo, executive director of Fair Trade Alliance.

RP a net importer

Ofreneo said the Philippine WTO negotiating team must focus on adopting corrective measures and securing special and differential treatment for developing countries in the upcoming trade talks.

The Philippines became a WTO member in 1995, the same year it became a net importer, to the detriment of its agricultural sector and domestic industries.

Ofreneo said the Philippine negotiating team, led by the Department of Trade and Industry, must have a clear framework for development and a strong awareness of the unique development needs of the Philippines.

"This is a global war, and the Philippines must know how to strategize," he said.

He also urged the negotiating panel to get credit for the unilateral liberalization the Philippine government has undertaken over the last decade.

"The President's marching orders are basically just to implement the strategy that we have been following so far; that's basically it," Philippines Tariff Commission chair Edgrado Abon, a member of the negotiating panel, said in an interview.

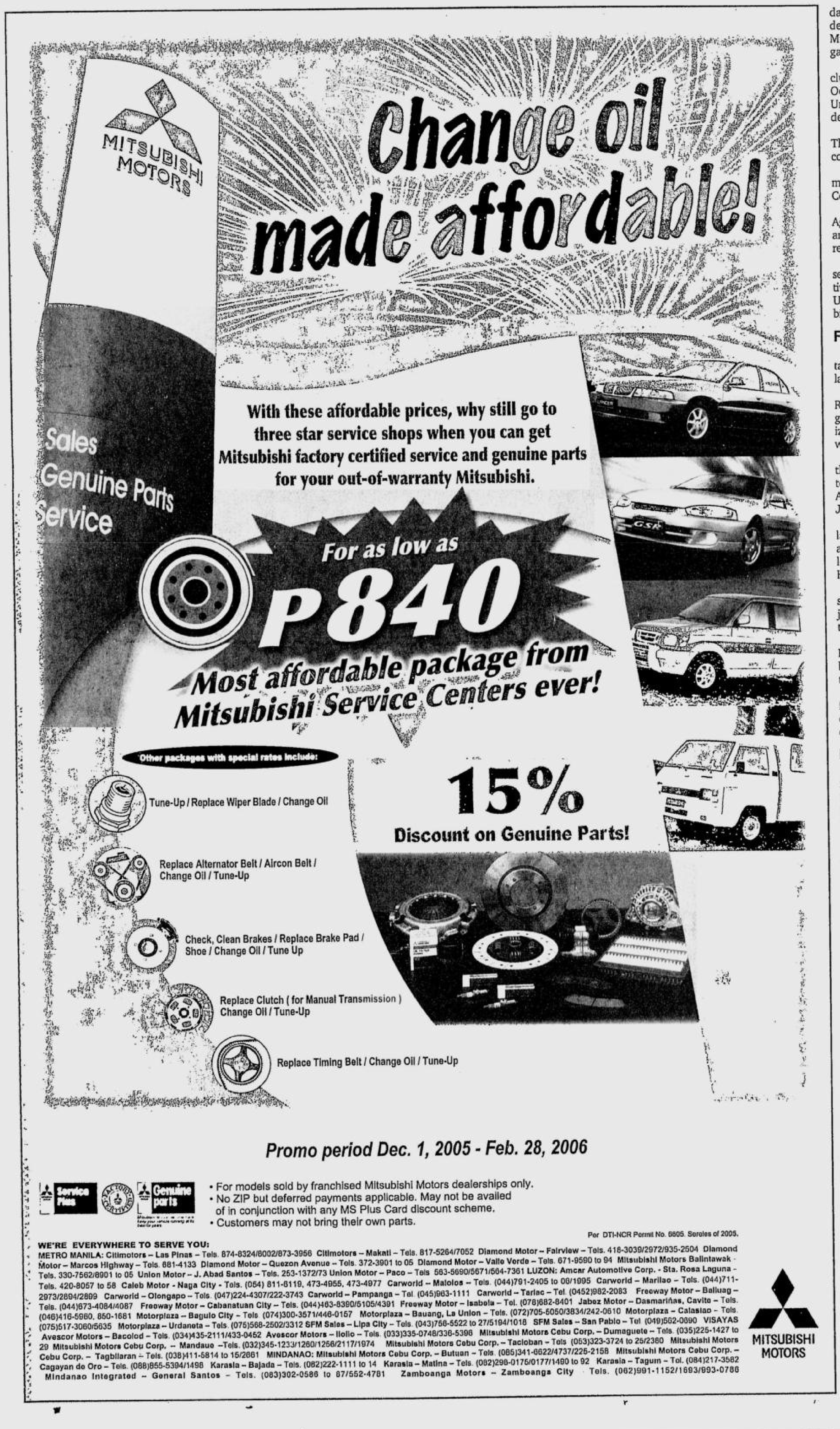
"We are ready in the sense that we know what we want, without telegraphing our position. We know these things. We want to maximize flexibility. We've done simulations on our formula. We did our assignments," Abon said.

While the official Philippine team's negotiating strategy remains vague to some stakeholders, the campaign of rallyiers outside the Wan Chai convention center would be loud and clear.

"No deal is better than a bad deal," goes the slogan of the SNR, which is moving to derail the trade talks and cause the collapse of another Ministerial meeting as happened in Cancun, Mexico, in 2003 and in Seattle, USA, in 1999.

"Three could be the magic number," said economist Walden Bello, executive director of Focus on the Global South, the secretariat group of SNR.

He said civil society's role in the Hong Kong Ministerial would be crucial to staging a repeat of Cancun, adding that the collapse would not have happened without the strong presence of civil society groups.



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Davide to address his lecture series

CHIEF JUSTICE HILARIO G. DAVIDE Jr. will be the featured speaker at the concluding Chief Justice Hilario G. Davide Jr. Distinguished Lecture Series on Dec. 13 at the Supreme Court Session Hall. He will talk on "The State of the Judiciary."

The lecture series is a yearlong monthly activity designed to promote the Chief Justice's vision of "a judiciary that is independent, effective and efficient, and worthy of public trust and confidence."

The lectures are free and open to the public. Significantly, Davide's lecture is expected to be his valedictory since he is retiring on Dec. 20.

'Ceasefire up to NPA'

By Nikko Dizon

A CEASEFIRE BETWEEN GOVERNMENT troops and communist rebels in deference to the holiday season remains to be seen, with ranking government officials saying it would all depend on the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA).

"There is no serious discussion on the ceasefire yet," National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales told reporters in an interview after the sendoff for President Macapagal-Arroyo who left for Malaysia yesterday morning to attend the 11th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) summit.

"It depends on the actuation of the CPP-NPA. If they continue with their stance now to increase their pressure on the Armed Forces, how can you have a ceasefire?" Gonzales said.

In a separate interview, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police were studying the situation to determine the position the government should take on the ceasefire issue.

"I spoke to the (AFP) chief of staff (Gen. Generoso Senga). They are going to submit their recommendation. The NPA leadership, especially Armando Liwanag, who we know to be Joma (Jose Ma.) Sison, is to intensify violent actions against government forces and other important targets," Ermita said.

Nevertheless, Ermita expressed optimism there would be a break from the fighting.

"I wouldn't want to guess but if we go by tradition, there would be (a ceasefire). What should be determined is how long and when. Nevertheless, even if there's a ceasefire, our soldiers and police are in complete defensive mode," he said.

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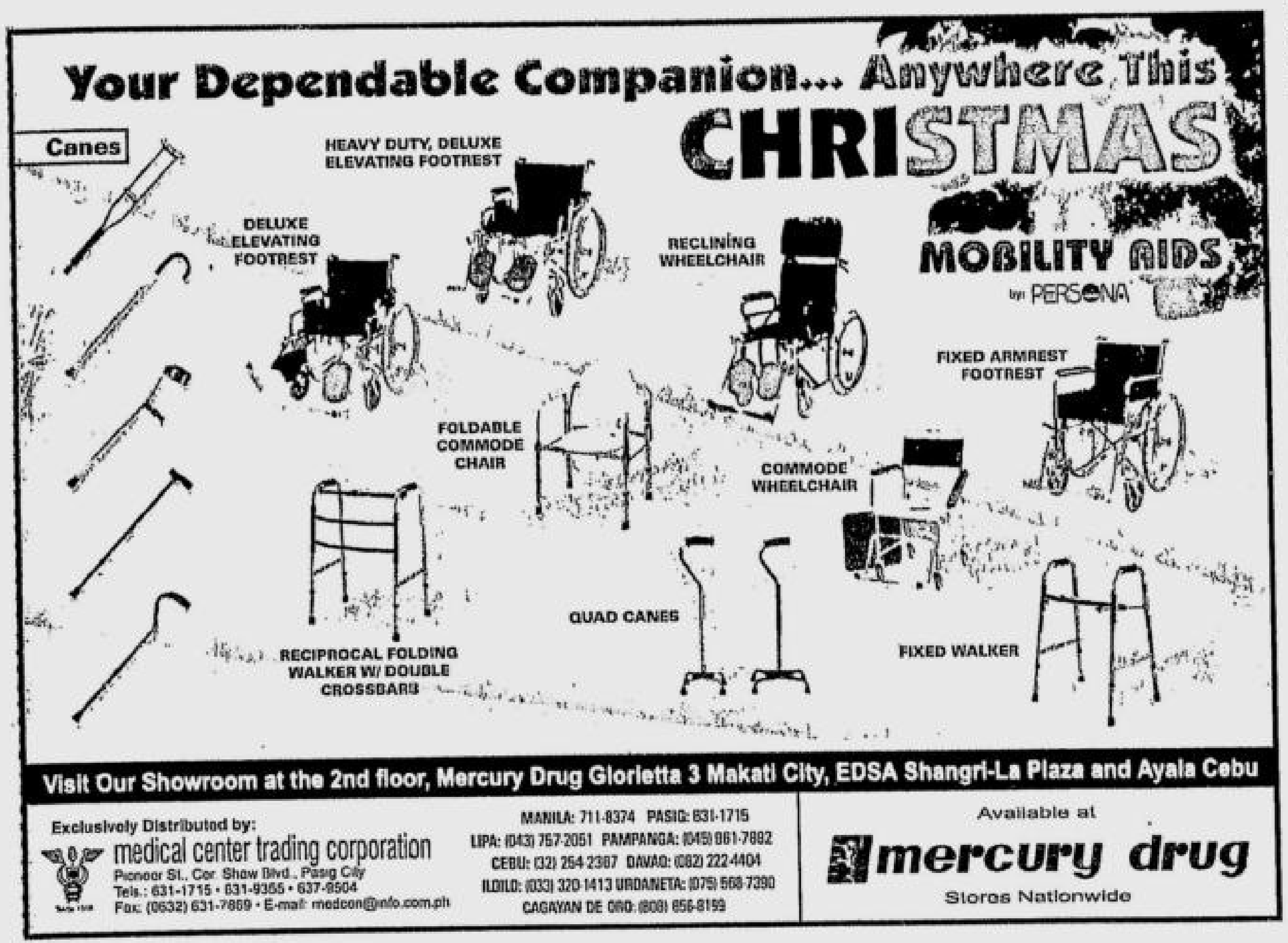

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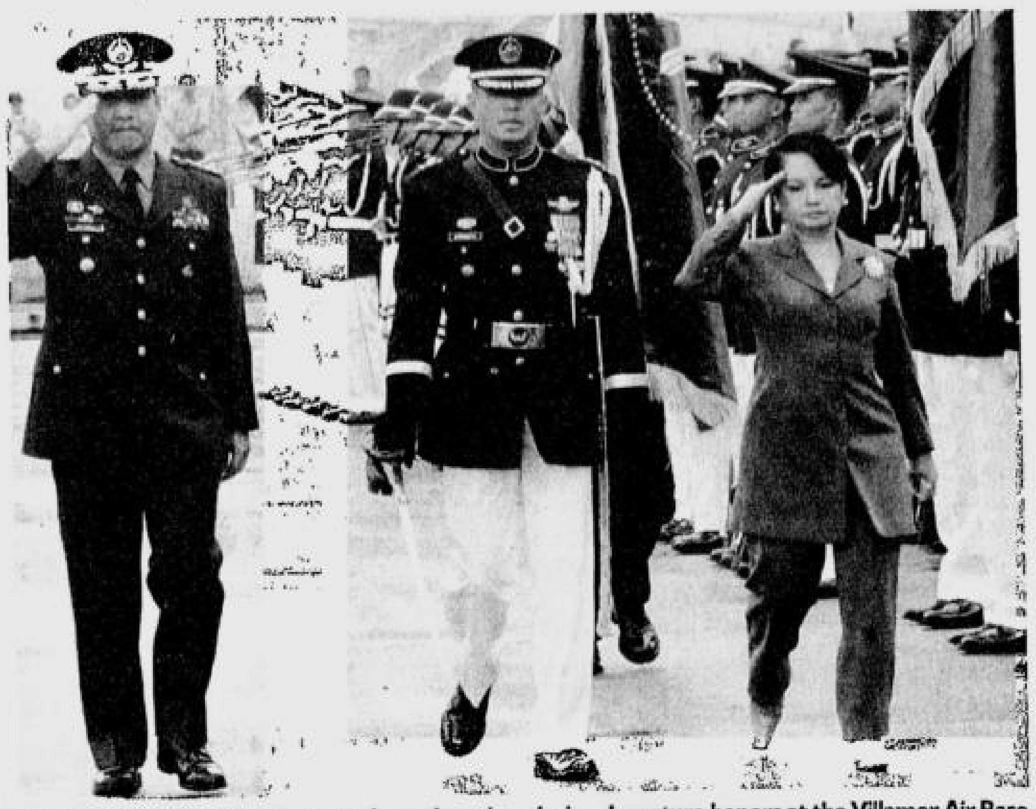

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo salutes the colors during departure honors at the Villamor Air Base in Pasay City. She left for Kuala Lumpur to attend the 11th Asean Summit Meeting. MALACAÑANG PHOTO

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- EXEMPT MINIMUM WAGE WORKERS FROM PAYING INCOME TAX
  The President can immediately grant an income tax exemption to those earning a minimum daily wage of P275 which is acceptable to Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Sec. Pat Sto. Tomas, in consultation with Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) President Donald Dee & the Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) President Rene Soriano.
- GRANT THE INCREASE IN MINIMUM WAGE BY FEBRUARY 15, 2006
  President Arroyo should direct the regional tripartite wages and productivity board (RTWP) nationwide to determine the erosion of purchasing power due to the implementation of the EVAT Law & implement the increase in minimum wage rate on or before February 15th.

COPW appeals to the President to also immediately implement the non-wage measures initiated by DOLE and agreed upon by PCCI and ECOP --- representing small & medium-sized enterprises. This is for the benefit of the minimum, middle, and low-income workers.

1. Assign more Rolling Stores in depressed areas
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2. Remove 50% tariff on imported NFA rice & reduce subsidy by P4/kilo
   Now that NFA imports rice because of shortage, the 50% tariff should be removed. Coupons will also be used to control that NFA rice is sold directly to poor consumers. To prevent abuses and to ensure transparency, businesses & NGOs should monitor these distribution centers.
3. Provide shuttle buses or transportation assistance
   DOLE will be the facilitator in discussions with PCCI & ECOP regarding provisions for free or subsidized shuttle services for factory workers & to ensure that NOT ONLY those from depressed areas are covered.
4. 13th month pay must be paid by ALL on December 16th with NO exemptions.

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Bird flu, Suu Kyi, high oil prices top agenda of Asean summit

From page A1

will give their political commitment," he told reporters.

"It's action-oriented," he said.

The meetings come as Asean faces a reputation crisis over Burma's glacial pace of democratic reforms that its junta has promised. Asean members also are fuming over the general's refusal to free pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

The frustrations of Burma's Asean colleagues, under pressure from the United States and Europe to bring the junta in line, have been made clear to Burma, Ong said.

Slap on face

Burma has been told that the recent extension of Suu Kyi's house arrest by another six months is a slap on the face of Asean, according to Ong.

Asked if Asean was putting more pressure on Burma, he said: "Yes. There is a clear sense because Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and the Philippines have told Burma that we have to do more because we just can't simply follow what we did in the past."

On Saturday, Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said the junta's democratization process was like "glue flowing up the hill."

High world oil prices and terrorism also will figure prominently in the talks.

Indonesia's president told business leaders yesterday that East Asian countries could pool resources to build refineries and develop alternative energy sources, as well as deepen cooperation with the oil-rich Middle East.

"Some of us are oil-producing countries and others have capital to be shared in building refineries, in trade, in many things including in developing bio-energy," Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono said.

Decisive action

Singapore's prime minister said that although Asean was bringing down trade barriers and unifying markets among its 10 economies, things must move quicker for Asean to be a player alongside China and India.

"Combined, these two economic powerhouses will shift the center of gravity of the world economy toward Asia," Lee Hsien Loong told business leaders. "In order to stay in the game, Asean must therefore take decisive action."

Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said in a speech Saturday that India and China combined would outstrip the United States as the dominant global economy by 2050.

"To keep pace with China and India, Asean would need to maintain the momentum of improving its business-friendly environment," Abdullah said.

Russia signs accord

Russia is waiting in the wings, anxious to join the East Asia Summit in coming years but has so far failed to meet a key prerequisite of having substantial trade ties with Asean. The bloc's trade with Russia accounted for only 0.4 percent of the region's global trade in 2004.

However, Moscow signed an economic cooperation accord with Asean on Saturday.

Also Saturday, Australia signed the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation with Asean, a nonaggression pledge that allowed it a seat at the East Asia Summit table.

"They want to be part of this region and to participate and contribute. And we welcome all. this," Malaysian Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar said.

Canberra had refused to sign for more than a decade, saying it could conflict with obligations under its security treaty with the United States. But signing is a small price to pay in return for the benefits of ties with Asean, Downer said.

"That is a quid pro quo that we can live with," he said. "It's as simple as that. Signing is the price we pay."

Transparency

The summit declaration on bird flu pledges a raft of steps to control the disease that has killed 69 people in Asia since 2003 and left millions of poultry dead or culled.

Experts fear the H5N1 virus strain could trigger a human flu pandemic if it mutates into a form that is easily spread between people.

China and other Asian nations plan to adopt a pledge to report all outbreaks rapidly and transparently, further underscoring the need for countries to be candid and cooperate against the threat.

The declaration says the 16 countries would commit "to effective containment ... and ensure rapid, transparent and accurate risk communications among participating countries." A copy of the three-page declaration was seen by The Associated Press yesterday.

Complementary

The declaration will complement other mechanisms put in place by the World Health Organization, Ong said.

The document reflects concerns that governments may hesitate in reporting outbreaks of the H5N1 strain in order to avoid harming tourism and their economies.

China, which last month confirmed its first human cases on its mainland, has denied covering up its bird flu situation as it was accused of doing during an outbreak of SARS three years ago.

However, Chinese authorities say they fear incompetent officials in poor, rural areas may not detect and report cases as quickly as they should.

An arrangement will be prepared for sharing anti-flu drugs so that not every country has to stockpile hundreds of millions of tablets. "We sense there is going to be a tremendous drain on our resources if every country stockpiles medicine, hospital supplies and anti-viral drugs," Ong said.

Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi is expected to announce during the summit a financial package to help Asean contain bird flu and prevent a possible human pandemic. *AP*

CBCP head vows return to mission

By Christian V. Esguerra

SMARTING FROM OBSERVATIONS THAT THE Church had more and more immersed itself in political issues, the new president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) has pledged to lead a return to more parochial concerns.

Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo said on CBCP Online that his fresh two-year term would focus on the pastoral mission of the Catholic Church.

"Renewal and evangelization are the challenges facing the Philippine Church," he said. "If we focus more on our pastoral mission, we might not get the impression that we are just responding to political crises."

He said his leadership would concentrate on implementing the decrees of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP II) and the National Pastoral Consultation on Church Renewal.

This would mean a more important role for the CBCP's different commissions which are in charge of key tasks such as prison care and public affairs. "The working heart of the CBCP is the commissions," Lagdameo said.

Lagdameo pledged to strengthen the Basic Ecclesiastical Communities (BECs), noting that these were "very visible for many people."

The BECs help extend the Church's reach to far-flung communities which are short of priests.

The BECs are also important in carrying out the nine pastoral priorities that have guided the mission of the CBCP since the last decade.

These priorities are integral faith formation, empowerment of the laity towards social transformation, ensuring the active presence and participation of the poor in the Church, making the family a focal point of evangelization, building and strengthening of participatory communities that make up the parish, renewal of the clergy, journeying with the youth, ecumenism and interreligious dialogue, and animation and formation for mission.

In his first public appearance as CBCP president last week, Lagdameo said individual renewal was the key to national transformation. In his speech at the 24th National Prayer Breakfast, he cautioned the faithful against finding fault with other people rather than first taking steps at improving themselves.

Rains shut bridges, down phone lines

HEAVY RAINS CLOSED FOUR BRIDGES IN the Cagayan Valley yesterday while flooding forced some 50 families to flee their homes in Isabela on Saturday night, the National Disaster Coordinating Council in Manila said.

Telephone lines, meanwhile, were still down in Calapan City in Oriental Mindoro, the province hardest hit by flooding last week, the NDCC said.

While roads and bridges from Aparri, Cagayan, to Santa Fe, Nueva Ecjia, were passable, the Pinacanuan River in San Mariano, Isabela; the Cagayan River in Naguilian, La Union; the Magat River in Ramon, Siffu River in Roxas and Ganano River in Santiago, all in Isabela, swelled, swamping four bridges.

NDCC identified the impassable bridges as the Pinacanuan Bridge in Tuguegarao City, and the Tatibubun Bridge in Jones, San Guillermo Bridge in Angadanan and Sta. Maria Bridge in Cabagan, all in Isabela.

Floodwaters also hit five barangays in four towns of Isabela. Some 50 families in Barangay San Andres, San Mateo town, were evacuated Saturday night to higher ground.

The floodwaters in Calapan City, however, continued to recede, according to the emergency agency.

As of 7:30 p.m. Saturday, some 382 families in the city were still in evacuation centers.

"But the remaining families in evacuation centers are expected to return to their homes any time today (Sunday)," the NDCC said.

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GMA thanks RP migrant workers for peso surge

By Christine O. Avendaño

KUALA LUMPUR (via PLDT)—PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo last night thanked Filipino overseas workers here for helping lift the country's economy through their remittances which had made the peso "the strongest (currency) in Asia," if not the world.

"Thank you for working here to help your family back home but also you are a great help to our country," she told the Filipino community whom she met on the first day of her 4-day visit to attend the 11th Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit.

Ms Arroyo told some 700 Filipinos who packed the Saloma theater and restaurant that OFW remittances were expected to amount to $12 billion by yearend, compared to $7-$8 billion last year.

Stronger voice

"Our currency is the strongest in Asia and maybe of the whole world," Ms Arroyo said in Filipino.

She said the economic and financial reforms of her administration had spurred confidence in the country.

"This strengthens our voice to call for decision on key issues like trade, investment, security and human development," Ms Arroyo said.

She also said the Philippines' winning the overall championship in the recent Southeast Asian Games and the performance of the economy "make us proud to represent Filipinos in Asean and East Asia."

Cebu to host next summit

Before meeting the Filipino community here, Ms Arroyo attended the BIMP-Eaga (Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East Asia Growth Area) summit and held bilateral talks with Chinese Premier Wen Jiao Bao.

In their 30-minute one-on-one meeting, Ms Arroyo told Wen of the "significant progress" in the implementation of the Chinese-funded project to rehabilitate the North Luzon railway system.

According to Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye, Ms Arroyo told Wen the relocation of the informal settlers to be affected by the project had "proceeded at a very satisfactory pace."

Authorities have already cleared 30 km of the areas, Bunye quoted the President as telling Wen.

"The Chinese engineers are now welcome to take a look and start the ball rolling as far as the NorthRail project is concerned," Bunye said.

Ms Arroyo invited Wen to look at other areas where China could invest.

"The President noted that because of the increasing population of China, the demand for energy will also increase and the Premier promised to take a look not only at energy but other promising industries," Bunye said.

Ms Arroyo also told Wen about the "triple increase" in the number of Chinese tourist arrivals in the country, from 30,000 to 100,000.

Megadome to rise in Mandaue for next Asean summit meeting

By Christine O. Avendaño

KUALA LUMPUR(VIA PLDT)—AS HOST of next year's summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Manila is keenly observing how Kuala Lumpur is hosting the 11th Asean summit here today.

The next summit will be held in Cebu.

The Philippines is planning to build a "megadome" in Mandaue City for the summit.

Cebu delegation

On the eve of the 11th Asean summit, President Macapagal-Arroyo arrived in this Malaysian capital with a delegation from Cebu led by its governor, Gwen Garcia.

"We are really carefully looking at what's going on in here—how they receive us, how activities are being conducted here," said Garcia, whose delegation included Cebu City Mayor Tommy Osmeña and Cebu Representatives Antonio Cuenco and Nerissa Soon-Ruiz.

RP showcase

While she had been hearing that Cebu might host the next Asean summit, the governor said she only got official word when the President went to Cebu last month .

Ms Arroyo had remarked then that Cebu could "showcase what the Philippines could be."

"We certainly and we would like to assure the rest of the country that Cebu will roll out the red carpet and do everything that needs to be done in order to showcase our country," Garcia said.

4 nations OK joint sea patrols

From page A1

Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf group, which operates in Mindanao.

In 2000, Abu Sayyaf bandits seized 21 people, including Western tourists from a resort on Sipadan island in Sabah, a world-renowned dive site. Southern Philippines also is the base of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, a militant group fighting for self rule.

The Indonesian island of Sulawesi also faces the threat of militants. Maluku and central Sulawesi witnessed deadly clashes between Muslims and Christians between 1999 and 2001.

"These incidents are isolated but it creates a stigma on the region," said Ahmad Ali, chair of a group of chambers of commerce from the area. "This deters investors from going in."

Dureza said investments would not go to the "area if the level of security, the confidence in security is not that high. We have to address this."

The leaders agreed to boost transportation links to address the area's inadequate infrastructure—the other reason for low investment.

The four countries also agreed to consider joint investments in energy to prevent a supply crunch in the Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines-East Asia Growth Area (BIMP-Eaga).

Dureza, also the head of the Mindanao Economic Development Council, said Indonesia proposed that the Eaga nations—one of Asean's poorer subregions—step up cooperation to ensure sufficient fuel reserves in the area.

New reserves

Indonesia has become a net importer of oil and gas while the region's other major producers, Malaysia and Brunei, are straying into deeper and deeper waters to find new reserves to replace production from maturing fields closer to home.

The Philippines is also a net importer of oil and gas.

The group also agreed to hold a summit back to back with the Asean summit every year, Dureza said. *With reports from AP and Reuters*

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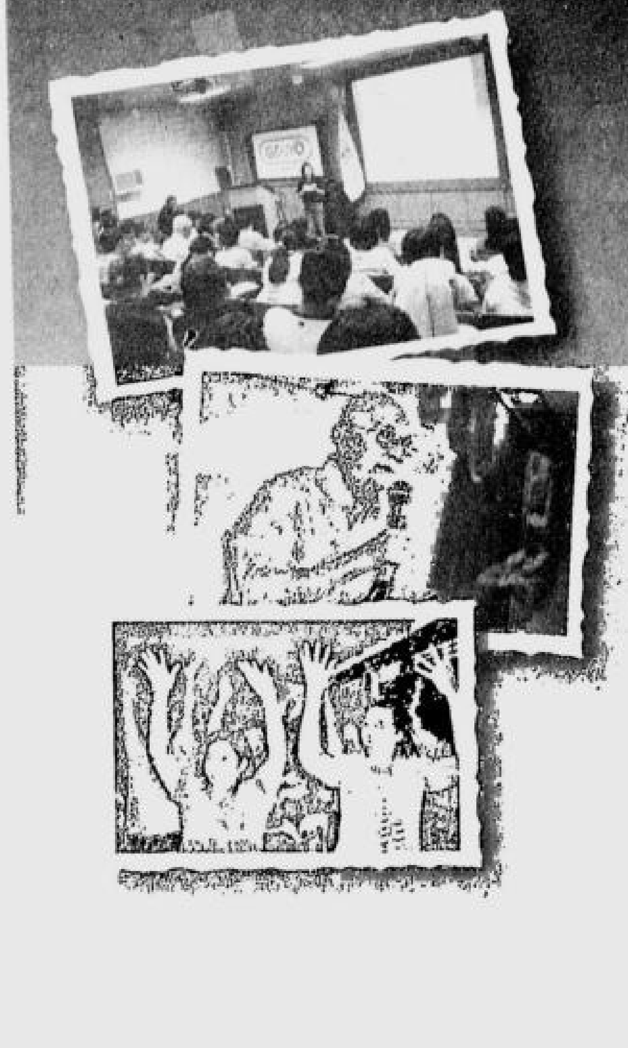

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Recount of Loren's votes starts today

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE SUPREME COURT, SITTING as the Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET), will finally start recounting the votes defeated vice presidential candidate Loren Legarda says were cast for her but unlawfully counted in favor of Vice President Noli de Castro in last year's national elections.

The recount is to be conducted at the Court of Appeals compound in Manila from 8:30 a.m. to noon, and from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily except Saturdays and Sundays.

Legarda is contesting De Castro's victory, charging that he and his running mate, President Macapagal-Arroyo, had cheated. Legarda's running mate, presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr., had also filed an electoral protest but the PET dismissed it after Poe died last year.

Lawyers for Legarda and De Castro estimated the vote recount could last between nine months and two years of a tedious, manual process that could become embroiled in bickering over procedural and technical matters.

But even if Legarda were to win the recount, the question of who really won the vice presidential race could drag on for up to two more years as De Castro has filed a counter-protest against Legarda questioning the results in at least 50,000 precincts where she won. According to De Castro's lawyer, Romulo Macalintal, these votes would also have to be recounted and verified.

The recount today will initially involve ballots cast in 7,764 precincts in Cebu. Legarda's protest covers 125,000 ballot boxes from as many precincts in Cebu, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao and Pampanga.

"I am confident that when the ballot boxes from the contested precincts are opened up, the PET will find enormous discrepancies between the election results based on the ballots actually cast and the returns reported in the statements of votes and the certificates of canvass," Legarda said.

Congress, sitting as the National Board of Canvassers, proclaimed De Castro the winner of the vice presidential contest with a total of 15,100,431 votes. Legarda had 14,218,709 votes, or a difference of 881,722 votes.

In her protest, Legarda said the "correct results" appearing in the election returns from the precincts were not actually reflected in subsequent documents, like statements of votes (SOVs) by precinct, the municipal certificates of canvass, the SOVs by municipality and, finally, in the city and provincial certificates of canvass.

In tallying the votes, she said, Congress relied on the COCs and rejected opposition moves to open the election returns from the precincts.

Suspected illegal drugs found in Thai candies

BUREAU OF CUSTOMS PERSONnel seized on Saturday 48 sachets of suspected illegal drugs concealed in 200 bags of repacked tamarind candies from Bangkok, Thailand, at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

Initial investigation showed the suspected drugs, that came in colored tablets and capsules, were either Ecstasy or Bangkok pills.

"We're positive that the tablets and capsules are illegal because why would they be concealed inside the candy bags, which is a creative way of trying to hide something," said Mimel Tuason, Naia customs passenger arrival services chief.

The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency is examining the seized tablets and capsules to determine if these are indeed illegal drugs, Tuason said.

Naia customs collector Ricardo Belmonte inspected the seizure yesterday morning.

"What if these are real drugs and the (tamarind) bags are sold in the market and are bought by children? What would happen?" Belmonte said.

The Thai tamarind candies, a favorite among Filipinos, were packed in a brown box that had been placed inside a package of fresh orchids that arrived via Kuwait Airlines flight KU 411 from Bangkok.

Upon examination, customs inspectors Melrose Ellego and Samuel Saed noticed that the tamarind bags appeared to have been repacked.

The package was addressed to Dang Trinidad of Quezon City and was claimed by Joerly Maghari, a non-passenger, at the Naia customs arrival area.

Maghari is in the custody of the customs police and is undergoing investigation. She claimed she was only picking up the package of orchids. *Nikko Dizon*

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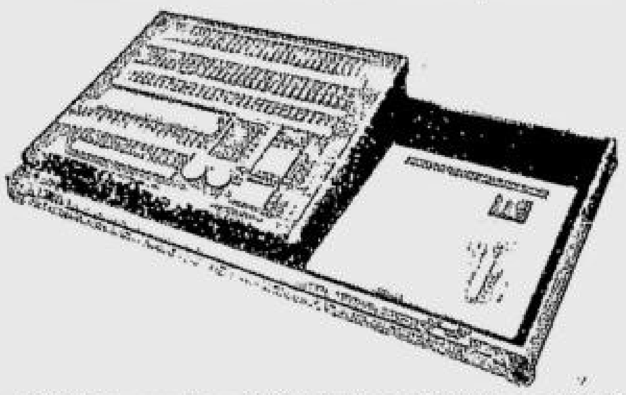

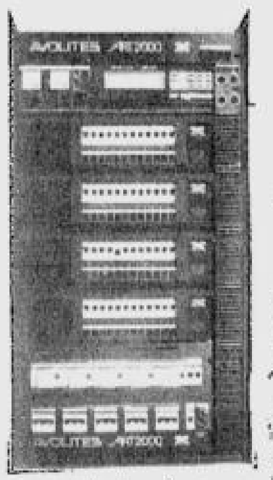

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What's the capital of Burma? Military junta surprises Asean

From page A1

never even told their Asean neighbors.

"It came as a big surprise and that worried many Asean members," Thai Foreign Minister Kantathi Suphamongkhon told reporters here on the sidelines of a meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

"Some of us were very surprised that we were not informed before about the move," Kantathi said. "It's such a big thing, and we were not kept informed at all."

The military junta last month revealed that it was shifting its capital from Rangoon (Yangon) to remote Pyinmanar, a move that many observers saw as indication that the regime was growing even more isolated from the international community.

Kantathi said Burmese Foreign Minister Nyan Win had since explained to his Asean colleagues the reason for the sudden move, but added that worries about being kept in the dark still lingered.

Sharing a bit more

"In general terms, [the junta said] that it is centrally located and they feel that it is more appropriate. Those reasons are their reasons, which is fine for us. The point of contention was that we were not informed before," he said.

"If we're close, if we're friends, we have to share a bit more."

Asean admits it is under pressure to tackle Burma over the slow pace of democratic reforms, even as it has insisted that the only way to move forward is to remain engaged with the military junta, rather than expelling the country from the group.

Burma has been ruled by the military since 1962, earning for itself pariah status with the international community.

House arrest

Opposition leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi remains under house arrest and her National League of Democracy party, which won elections in 1990, was never allowed to take power.

The junta has kept UN envoys from visiting over the past two years, and its promises to hold national reconciliation talks leading to the establishment of a constitution have been derided by the United Nations as a sham.

With the Asean holding its summit here this week, frustration with Burma has boiled over to open, and unusually blunt, criticism.

On Saturday, Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer compared the pace of democratic reforms in the reclusive nation with watching "glue flowing up a hill."

Pyinmanar

And amid the mounting international concern, the junta last month revealed that it was shifting the center of its operations to Pyinmanar.

Reporters who visited the town found new six-lane roads leading into a forest, carrying no traffic except construction equipment and military vehicles. With no advance warning, government workers were ordered to move.

"We just would like to have more communication as such," the Thai foreign minister said.

While Asean wants to keep dialogue with Burma alive, the group is "feeling that so much time has passed," Kantathi added. *AFP*

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RP captures heart of young Korean missionary

From page A1

the Gospel, focusing on the Christian belief in Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of all humanity's sins.

Life beyond Masbate

So moved was the boy that he joined Hyun's group on its way back to Manila, she said.

He has since gone to college, becoming an active member of the IYF, one of the biggest youth organizations worldwide with chapters in 50 countries.

Junlan has found there is life outside of Masbate.

"He was so surprised about himself," Hyun said.

But talking about their faith is one thing for Filipinos. Living it is entirely different.

Filipinos can learn

"Filipinos listen with an open heart and that is very impressive for me," Hyun said. "But once I point out a wrong belief in the Bible, they don't want to change that, even though they listen well."

In a sense, Filipinos might learn something from Koreans.

Despite not having a single, dominant religion, Koreans have a strong spiritual conviction, she said. "They stake their whole life on their faith."

In contrast, while not a few Filipinos are devout people, religion—in reality—plays "only a small part in their lives," she said.

One of their own

The attitude doesn't dismay Hyun or cool her plans to live in the country.

Her trips to the provinces also brought her face to face with the famous Filipino hospitality.

Never was there a time, throughout her missionary work, that residents didn't treat her as one of their own, she said. It helped that she was quick to learn Tagalog and adapt to the Filipino way of life.

It got so, Hyun said, that she was sure she wouldn't get lost even if she was left by herself on Edsa or at the Luneta. She knew her way around SM North and, if she needed help with anything at all, she did not hesitate to ask the nearest "*manong*" or "*manang*."

A letter for Hyun

On her group's last day in Marinduque, where she stayed with the family of a young woman named Kristine, her friend from the University of the East, Hyun got a memorable sendoff.

The children who attended the Bible activities gave her a short letter written in Tagalog. It was swollen with gratitude and well wishes for the young and pretty Korean.

She opens the letter whenever nostalgia for the Philippines visits her in the perennially cold city of Busan. "Reading it, I'm determined that I'll go back."

Hyun, who is much more fluent in Tagalog than in English, described the Marinduque children as "very pure," referring to their innocence.

Sharing her heart

Before leaving for Manila, she left them a mirror, comb and pens.

"I can't forget their faces, how they poured their heart to me," she says. "I don't see that kind of children in Korea."

Her longing for the country not her own was quite clear when she volunteered to assist in the recent Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) summit in Busan—she specifically asked to work with the Philippine delegation.

She ended up working with Filipino reporters, a tireless one-woman welcome party.

"I missed Filipinos so much so I was so happy during [the] Apec [meet]," she said. "There are Filipinos whom I like and I want to share my heart with."

The good in them

Another Korean couple were similarly fascinated with Filipinos. At the farewell dinner for the media, the wife approached the INQUIRER and asked if she could have his official delegation pin, an embossed Philippine flag.

It turned that she and her husband were longtime admirers of the country, collecting anything Filipino, from pins and figurines to pictures and postcards.

"When I first came to the Philippines, I thought it was I who would teach them something," Hyun said. "In the process, it was I who learned a lot from them."

Indeed, crimes, disasters and endless political conflicts can't wash away the faith and the strong familial ties that endure in this part of the world.

It's sad that it would take a young, idealistic Korean to remind Filipinos of the good in them.

Phone line pilferage rampant nationwide

From page A1

said. "I felt isolated from friends and acquaintances, since I don't use a cell phone."

Aling Connie and Arnold are among the tens of thousands of subscribers who lost their land-line service because of the growing problem of phone wire theft in the country.

Thieves are cutting phone cables for the copper, a metal fetching record prices on the world market.

Over the past two years, the incidence of theft in the networks of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) and other telephone companies across the country has risen exponentially.

PLDT, the country's biggest telecommunications firm, for instance, recorded 154 incidents in 2002, 254 in 2003 and 2,251 in 2004.

More than P200M

As a result, kilometer upon kilometer of cable have been lost, making the telecommunications industry spend more than P200 million just to restore the pilfered lines.

No city or town in Metro Manila has escaped the epidemic of phone line pilferage. The metropolis lost a total of 40 km of PLDT phone cables in 2004 and 42 km in the first nine months of the year.

Aling Connie's phone fell silent not once but thrice in just two months, as she lives in a part of Metro Manila that registered the biggest surge in cable pilferage.

"We restored the line the night before, but the next day it was dead again," said Ruel Agravante, a business specialist of the PLDT Business Zone in Muntinlupa.

"They climbed up a tree and sawed off the cable," Agravante said of the thieves who took down 60 meters (which had a diameter of a P5 coin and 200 pairs of wire) in July that caused Aling Connie's phone to go out of service. Each pair of 0.4mm wires corresponds to a line.

From 0.51 km in 2004, the length of cable pilfered in Muntinlupa rose fivefold to 2.52 km between January and September this year, downing 5,705 lines, according to the PLDT Asset Protection Center. The cables lost were longer than the combined length of those stolen in Parañaque, Las Piñas and Makati cities.

By far, Quezon City was the hardest hit, losing 9.54 km of PLDT cable that affected 25,015 lines during the nine-month period.

Provinces

Outside the metropolis, those hit the hardest were Tarlac, Negros Oriental and Cavite. Others heavily affected were Laguna, Pangasinan, Pampanga, Cebu, Negros Occidental, Iloilo and Capiz.

All told, PLDT lost 72.6 km of cable from January to September that temporarily put out of commission 185,318 lines. Last year, the company lost 75 km, affecting 105,798 lines.

The theft cost the telecommunications firm enormous sums—P89.86 million in restoration work last year and P75.88 million in the first nine months, according to the PLDT Asset Protection Center.

Other telephone companies are being hit as hard as PLDT.

Innove Communications Inc., which operates the fixed-line business of Globe Telecom Inc., said cable theft became rampant starting in 2004.

From 2004 to May 2005, Innove recorded an average of nine cases of thefts a month in Luzon.

Leoncio Cantonjos, head of Innove's Customer Operations Support, said that in 2003, there were fewer than 20 cases of pilferage in Luzon and "almost zero" in the Visayas.

"In Luzon, the most affected is Cavite. In the Visayas, it is the Negros province," Cantonjos said.

From January to August, the Globe unit recorded 85 cases of cable theft in the Visayas.

Roughly 30 to 50 meters of Innove's multipair cable is stolen in each incident. "Usually we have 300-pair, 600-pair and 1,200-pair cables installed in the field," Cantonjos said.

Globe has spent more than P30 million just to replace the stolen cables.

Damage to credibility

The losses that Innove incurred do not include foregone revenue due to service interruption, lost opportunities for customers and damage to the company's credibility, Cantonjos said.

Bayan Telecommunications Inc., which services parts of Metro Manila, said it recorded more than 300 cases of cable pilferage in its network last year.

For its part, Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc. (Digitel) is having a difficult time in the Calabarzon area (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas and Quezon provinces).

"They are really pesky. These people keep on coming back," Digitel senior vice president William Pamintuan said of the pilferers.

From only two cases in the area for the whole of 2001, the incidence of pilferage went up at least nine times just from May to August this year.

Pamintuan said that in San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, Digitel lost 20 to 100 meters of cable. In Tabangao, Batangas, the length of pilfered lines ranged from 100 to 150 meters.

In Northern Luzon, badly hit was Baguio City, where Digitel lost about 500 meters.

"In Baguio, we spent about a million pesos for each incident. In San Jose, about P350,000 and in Tabangao, about P50,000," Pamintuan said.

In one instance, phone lines were out of service for four days in Tabangao after the phone system was hit by a spate of pilferage.

Small telephone companies belonging to the 48-member Philippine Association of Private Telephone Companies (Paptelco) are not immune to the theft.

Eric de los Reyes, Paptelco president, said Cruztelco lost to thieves a total of 6.5 km of cables from January to Nov. 30, costing it about P2 million.

"We shelled out for the replacement lines and we did not earn revenue from long-distance calls when the lines were down. We also paid rebates to subscribers," said De Los Reyes, also Cruztelco vice president for operations and marketing.

Cruztelco's cables were pilfered in Butuan City, Nasipit, Cagayan de Oro, San Francisco, Bayugan, Pagadian City and Dumaguete City.

Disrupted services

The phone outages have disrupted the delivery of services like health.

"Patients can't call us," said Dr. Henry Fernando of the Medical Polyclinic and Diagnostic Center in Muntinlupa, whose phone service was cut for two days in August.

"We cannot relay the results of their lab exams. Or if they want to ask us about medical problems, they can't call to inquire if the doctor is in," he said.

Fernando said the clinic also "cannot give updates to parents of children who had blood tests for possible dengue, making the parents anxious."

In Pasig City, people could not withdraw cash from or pay bills through an ATM on San Joaquin Street in the second week of July because the machine went offline as a result of phone cable theft.

Cable thieves did not spare the Northern Police District (NPD) headquarters in Metro Manila. For more than a week in July, the phones at the NPD compound were not working because thieves had sawn off a piece of PLDT's cable.

In that incident alone, according to PLDT, more than 200 subscribers were affected, including banks, hospitals, local government offices, police stations, fire departments and other establishments, not only in Caloocan but also in Navotas and Malabon.

"So you can just imagine the revenues and the chance to earn that were lost because cables were stolen," said Romimar Viray, a PLDT access engineer in Caloocan.

Among the businesses hit was a small computer shop owned by Lorena Suarez, who declared an 80-percent loss of income.

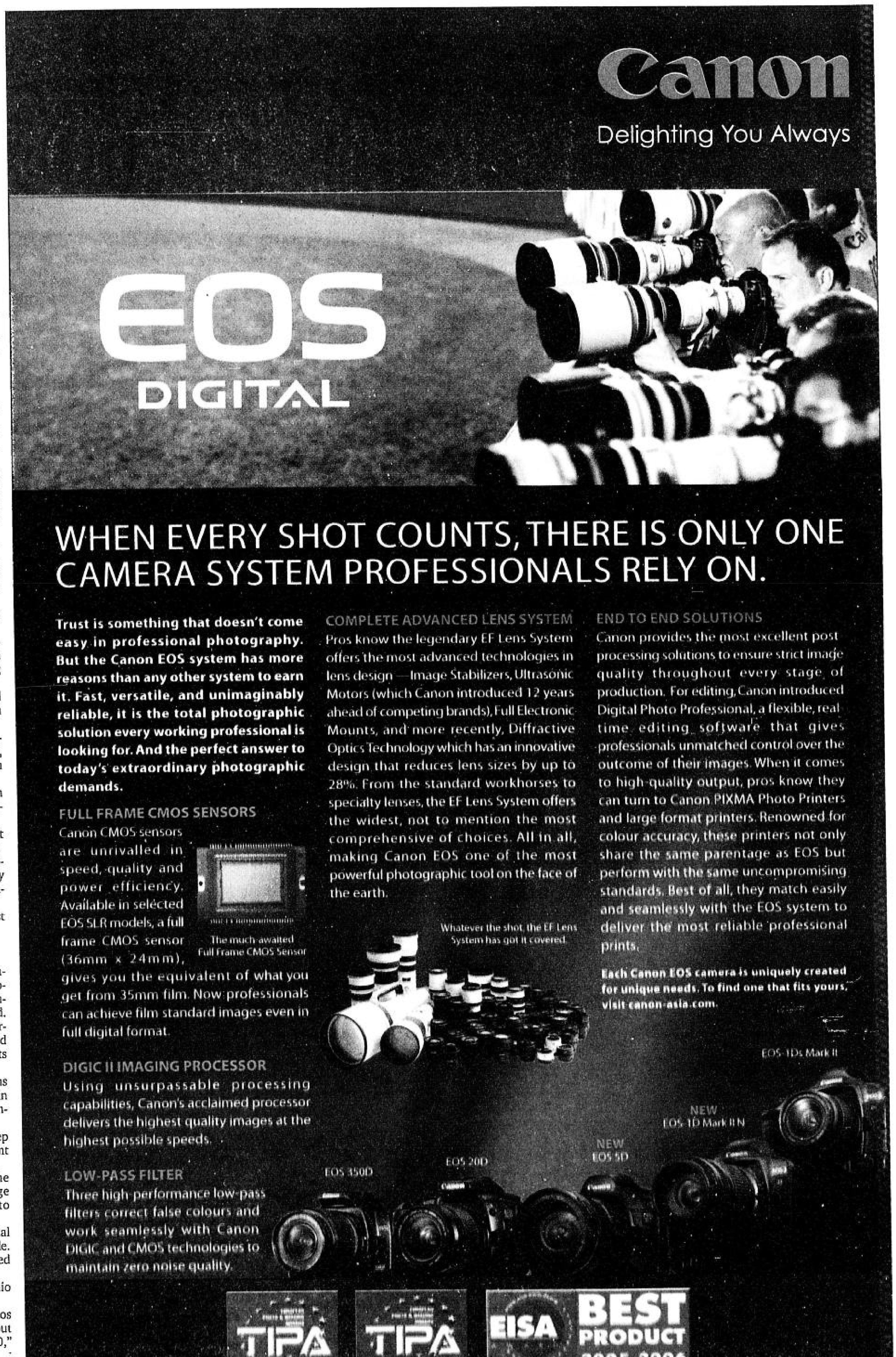
"We were like sitting ducks and could not do anything but wait for the line to be restored," Suarez said. *With a report from Nancy Carvajal*

PLDT cables lost to thieves

(Jan-Sept, 2005)

Greater Metro Manila NORTH	Length (meters)	Lines affected
Quezon City	9,540	25,015
Manil. San Juan	4,100	12,921
Caloocan	9,009	25,129
Rizal	4,599	11,689
Valenzuela	2,733	10,373
Pasig	1,739	3,407
Mandaluyong	430	2,435
Malabon	997	3,055
Marikina	244	4
Antipolo	614	3,418
Sub-total	**34,005**	**97,446**
GMM SOUTH		
Makati	706	2,723
Taguig	1,911	7,049
Parañaque	1,222	1,872
Muntinlupa	2,526	5,705
Pasay	1,169	4,510
Las Piñas	370	1,918
Sub-total	**7,904**	**23,777**
LUZON		
Nueva Ecija	1,100	1,852
Cavite	3,564	7,102
Laguna	2,757	7,388
Bataan	1,123	4,880
Tarlac	5,287	10,267
Pangasinan	1,653	1,570
LUZON	**Length in meters**	**Lines affected**
Pampanga	1,427	1,920
Quezon	157	405
Batangas	165	0
Baguio	231	1,077
Bulacan	999	2,225
Benguet	325	0
Ilocos Norte	290	86
Isabela	150	498
La Union	163	35
Zambales	350	0
Sub-total	**19,741**	**39,305**
VISAYAS/ MINDANAO		
Cebu	2,601	8,770
Negros Occidental	4,213	3,812
Bacolod	1,146	3,027
Davao	542	4,601
Iloilo	920	844
General Santos	116	450
Capiz	875	1,650
Misamis Oriental	315	1,336
Zamboanga	128	0
Agusan Del Norte	25	100
Negros Oriental	65	200
Sub-total	**10,946**	**24,790**
TOTAL	**72,596**	**185,318**

Source: Asset Protection Center, PLDT Co.



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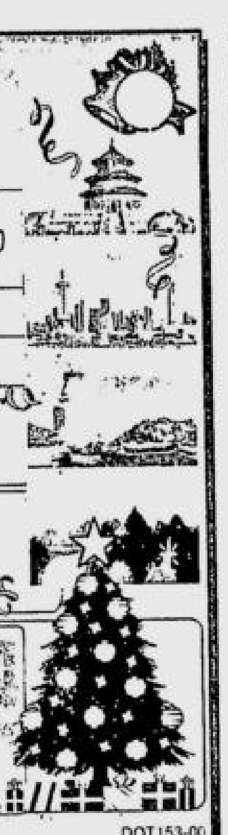

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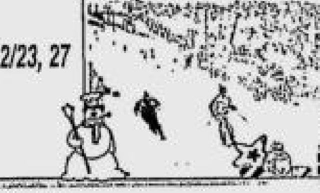

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Nigeria plane crashes in flames; 103 dead

LAGOS—A NIGERIAN JET AIRLINER PLUNGED in flames on to the tarmac at Port Harcourt airport on Saturday killing 103 people, among them scores of schoolchildren, an aviation official said.

Only seven of those on board survived, he said.

At least 65 of the passengers were children from the same secondary school in Abuja, according to a state government spokesperson who visited the scene of the crash.

There was no official confirmation of the cause of the disaster, but witnesses and officials said the jet overshot the runway during an electrical storm and may have been struck by lightning.

The crash was Nigeria's second major aviation disaster in as many months and will revive already pressing questions about the safety of the industry in Africa's most populous country.

"There was an accident at about 2:08 p.m. It involved Sosoliso flight 1145," said Sam Adurogboye, a spokesperson for the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority.

"The aircraft was a DC-9 with 110 souls on board. Seven were rescued. The rest died," he added.

Officials at Port Harcourt airport said that a large number of those who were killed were schoolchildren returning home for the Christmas holidays.

"The plane was burnt completely. I saw many bodies. Bodies of adults and children. I couldn't count them," said Honour Sirawoo, spokesperson for the deputy governor of Rivers State.

"There were 65 to 68 children from the same school in Abuja," he added. He could not give the name of the school or say if any of the pupils were among the survivors.

Sirawoo said that Rivers State Gov. Peter Odili had visited the site and had described what had happened as "the worst tragedy that has ever hit Rivers State."

The flight had arrived from the federal capital Abuja and was landing in Port Harcourt, the main center of Nigeria's oil industry and a base for many international companies.

A police spokesperson said that 57 bodies had been recovered and that the seven casualties had been taken to hospital.

"Rescue operations are still ongoing," police spokesperson Deputy Commissioner Haz Iwendi said.

An executive with an international security consultancy with staff at the airport said: "What we are hearing is that the plane was struck by lightning about 40 or 50 meters from touching down.

"The fuel in the wing caught fire and it exploded," he added.

Airport officials confirmed that there had been an eruption of flames as the plane crashed.

Sosoliso officials would not comment while executives were in a meeting about the crash.

The airline operates an aging fleet of three McDonnell Douglas DC-9 airliners and one MD-81, some of which formerly served with the Yugoslavian state airline JAT. *AFP*

EUGENE McCarthy in 1996 AP

Anti-Vietnam War icon ex-Sen. Eugene McCarthy dies at 89

WASHINGTON—FORMER US SEN. EUGENE McCarthy, whose 1968 anti-Vietnam War presidential candidacy helped drive President Lyndon Johnson from office, died on Saturday in Washington, his son said.

McCarthy, 89, a Democrat during his years as a senator from Minnesota, had suffered from Parkinson's disease, fell ill on Friday night and died from complications on Saturday morning in a Georgetown retirement home, said his son, Michael McCarthy.

"He's obviously going to be remembered for his opposition to the war in Vietnam and his campaign against Johnson but I think he'd maybe prefer to be remembered for his work on the Civil Rights Act ... Medicare and Medicaid and environmental law," his son said.

"Another thing about him was that he was able to participate in some of the most contentious debates of his time ... and do it on the basis of ideas and policies and not on personalities. I think that was one of the reasons he had such appeal to the young."

McCarthy made his mark in the turbulent 1968 campaign as a Pied Piper of the anti-Vietnam War movement that drove fellow Democrat Johnson from office.

With only $4,000 in campaign funds and no support from top Democrats, McCarthy launched his bid to unseat an incumbent president from his own party because, as he said, "the administration seems to have set no limits to the price that it is willing to pay for a military victory" in Vietnam.

Johnson and his aides dismissed McCarthy as a dreamer. He was, after all, a bookish fellow who was considered an outsider in the cliquish Senate.

What the skeptics missed was that McCarthy had tapped into the energy of college students and other young people who were rising to protest the Vietnam War in growing numbers.

Young volunteers flocked to his camp. People dubbed him "Clean Gene" for the thousands of long-haired students who went to the barber, donned conventional clothes, swore off drugs and generally cleaned up their acts to serve his cause.

More than 10,000 such youngsters converged on New Hampshire in March 1968 for the first primary of that presidential season, going door to door with their vote-McCarthy message.

McCarthy lost to Johnson but the vote—49 percent for the incumbent and 42 percent for McCarthy—was so close the media and political establishment interpreted it as a stunning defeat for Johnson.

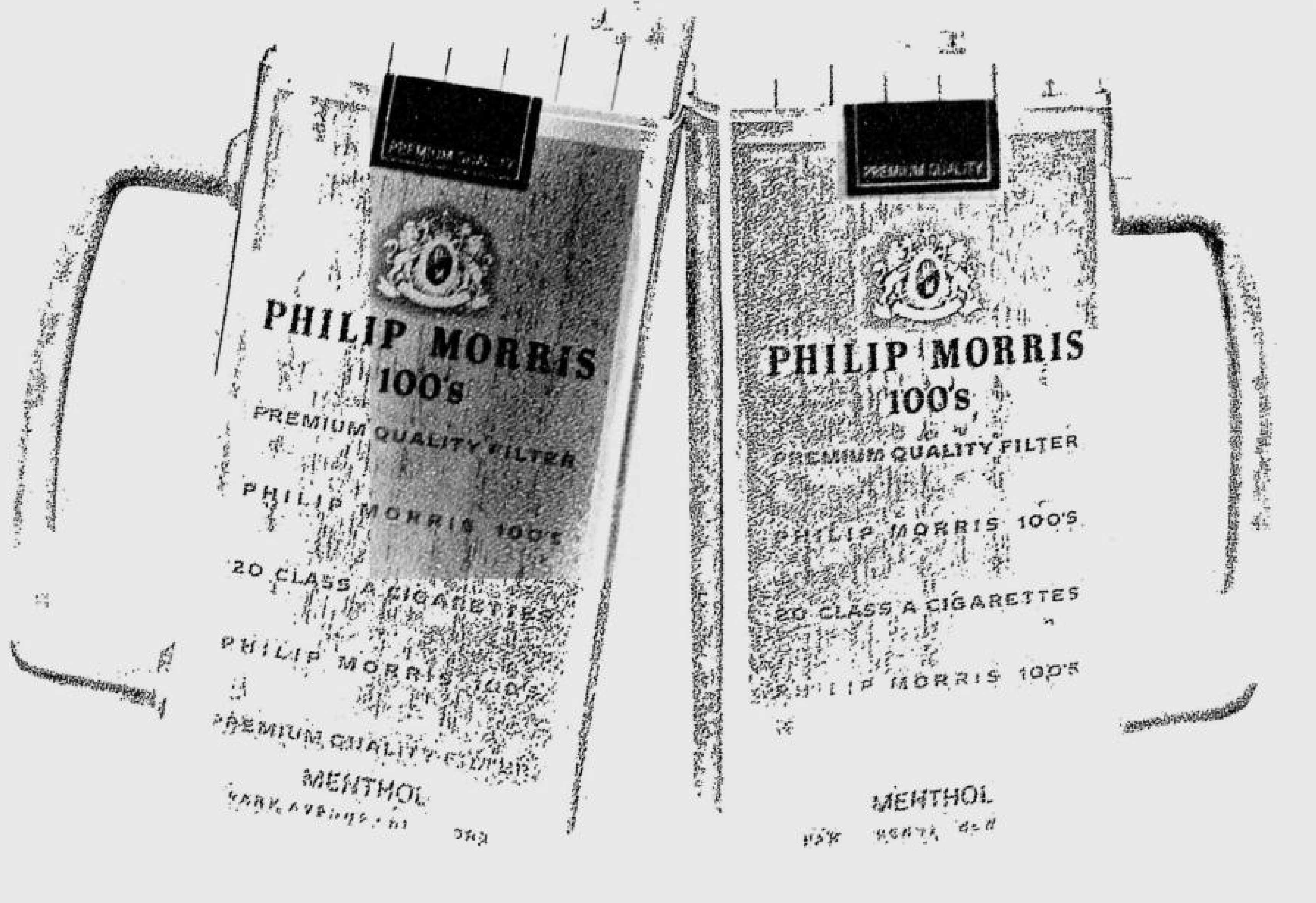
McCarthy's candidacy was soon overshadowed when New York Sen. Robert Kennedy, brother of the slain president, entered the race three days after the primary as an antiwar candidate.

By the end of the month, Johnson announced he would not run.

After Johnson's decision not to seek reelection and Kennedy's assassination in June after his victory in the California primary, Vice President Hubert Humphrey went on to take the Democratic nomination that year. He ultimately lost the presidential race to Republican Richard Nixon.

McCarthy staged quixotic presidential campaigns in later years but his moment had passed.

"Eugene McCarthy was a man of compassion and a tremendous figure in the Democratic Party. He dedicated his life to public service and made an enormous difference for the people of Minnesota and the entire United States," Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid said in a statement. *Reuters*



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Kyoto pact stronger after meet

MONTREAL—CRITICS DAMN IT FOR A LONG list of reasons and it has been declared dead several times, but the Kyoto Protocol emerged stronger than ever after the Montreal conference on climate change that ended here Saturday.

In a meeting that was gruelling and dramatic even by the extraordinary standards of past years, the UN pact for tackling greenhouse gases saw off a series of assaults and defiantly set its eyes on new horizons.

Gathering against a backdrop of ever-starker scientific warnings about global warming, Kyoto's 159 members approved crucial decisions on strengthening the treaty's mechanisms.

They also agreed to launch negotiations from next May on cutting greenhouse gas pollution beyond 2012, when the present Kyoto pledges run out.

The agreement will lift a dark shadow of uncertainty that had fallen over the fledgling market in carbon dioxide (CO2), an important Kyoto device set up to leverage cuts in emissions.

But it equally sent two in-your-face messages to the United States, a bitter opponent of Kyoto as well as the world's worst carbon polluter, accounting by itself for nearly a quarter of global emissions.

It told President George W. Bush that his rival format for tackling global warming—a mix of voluntary emissions cuts, smart energy technology and "partnerships" with Asia-Pacific nations—has failed to sap any support for Kyoto and its cap-and-trade format.

And it warned US politicians and businesses that, if the protocol's machinery works as well as its supporters claim, American corporations will lose out on the profits that can be reaped from the global carbon cleanup, so long as their country stays outside the Kyoto club.

Any US return to Kyoto is clearly impossible so long as Bush, who dramatically abandoned the treaty in 2001, remains in office.

And even after his departure in January 2009, there is likely to remain a groundswell of hostility to Kyoto in the United States.

To meet Kyoto's benchmarks requires industrialized countries to impose tougher fuel efficiency standards, regulations on CO2 emissions and laws to encourage use of renewable energy.

Such measures will be opposed by the US fossil-fuel and auto lobbies and by many American consumers, fearful of being wacked in the wallet.

But, a few years from now, another decision made at Montreal could well help to coax the US back into the Kyoto fold.

This one, made under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), of which the United States remains a member (as opposed to Kyoto, of which it is not), calls for a nonbinding "dialogue" on long-term emissions cuts among all parties.

The US delegation fought bitterly against this process, suspecting it to be the thin edge of a Kyoto wedge, or at the very least yet another disaster-in-the-making for the US image.

For all these big successes in Montreal for Kyoto and its supporters, the path ahead for the treaty remains sown with pitfalls. Just as 2005 showed off Kyoto's strengths, 2006 may well show its weaknesses.

AFP

MISS ICELAND Unnur Birna Vilhjalmsdottir adjusts her Miss World 2005 crown in Sanya on the Chinese island of Hainan Dec. 10.

REUTERS

Miss Iceland is surprise Miss World winner

SANYA, CHINA—MISS ICELAND UNNUR Birna Vilhjalmsdottir was crowned the surprise winner of the Miss World 2005 in a lavish ceremony watched live by millions across the globe on Saturday.

The 21-year-old Reykjavik student, daughter of Miss Iceland 1983, expressed her delight and astonishment at beating out a field of 102 young women from around the world.

The green-eyed brunette will serve as a goodwill ambassador and charity fund raiser for children's causes throughout next year and is likely to profit from a host of modeling and acting contracts.

"It was wonderful, so wonderful. It has been an amazing night," the 1.73 m (5 foot 8 inch) Vilhjalmsdottir said.

"I did not think that I would win, it was a big surprise.

Runner-up was Miss Mexico Dafne Molina Lona, representing the Americas, while the third place title went to Miss Puerto Rico Ingrid Marie Rivera Santos, representing the Caribbean zone.

Miss Philippines Carlene Aguilar had been the bookmakers' favorite.

Organizers said the pageant's 55th edition would reach an estimated audience of two billion.

Vilhjalmsdottir is a student from Reykjavik who has interned as a policewoman during her summer holidays while studying courses in anthropology and aspiring towards a career in law.

Winning the coveted title is likely to change her life, as she embarks on a rigorous year of charity appearances and advocating humanitarian causes.

"In the coming year I want to do just as much as I can to help. I would love to do what I can do for charity and for the children of the world," she said.

AFP

US comedian Richard Pryor dies at age 65

LOS ANGELES—GROUND-BREAKING African-American comedian Richard Pryor died of a heart attack early Saturday at the age of 65, his wife said.

PRYOR

REUTERS

The pioneering stand-up comic and actor who broke barriers with his unflinching racial satire had been in declining health for years after being diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1986.

Pryor died at Encino hospital near Los Angeles, Jennifer Pryor told CNN.

In the 1970s, Pryor was a top comedian in the United States, earning both top ratings and censorship from the networks for his profanity-laced, taboo-shattering antics during an era when television was still tame.

Born in Peoria, Illinois in December 1940, Pryor had a tumultuous childhood—his grandparents ran a brothel, according to one official biography. He dropped out of school, served in the Army from 1958 and 1960, then began touring the United States and Canada doing stand-up comedy in clubs.

But after years of clean-cut shows in the vein of Bill Cosby, Pryor famously walked offstage in the middle of a performance in Las Vegas, after staring into the audience and asking, "What the f--k am I doing here?"

Two years later he was back with an explosive new act, full of colorful language, vulgarities, and racial epithets, and tough street characters whose monologues reflected despair and disillusionment with life in America.

AFP

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Going down

EDITORIAL

THERE IS SOMETHING TO BE SAID ABOUT IGNOring surveys. President Macapagal-Arroyo's most famous classmate from Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., was damned again and again for reportedly governing by opinion polls. That prevented Bill Clinton—or so the argument went—from pursuing necessary but unpopular government programs.

Public opinion being the highly mutable living thing that it is, a government pursuing major reforms—or, to cite perhaps the most famous of Philippine examples, a Senate unwilling to extend a US military bases treaty—must have the internal fortitude to persevere despite adverse or, at least, indifferent public opinion.

There is also something to be said for not following surveys too closely. It would be sheer folly to expect a politician or a public office to enjoy an uninterrupted increase in satisfaction or approval ratings throughout a three-year or a six-year term. In the normal course of events, one's numbers in the medium term (that is, when they are most dependent on current events) cannot remain steady or be ever-ascendant. (Over a longer period of time, of course, it is possible to discern certain patterns. Deposed President Joseph Estrada, for instance, has always had the support of at least one-fourth of the population—except for those months immediately before and after he was deposed.)

The point is, we cannot accept survey results blindly.

Neither of the two caveats we mentioned, however, should be taken to mean that the Arroyo administration can afford to ignore the latest Social Weather Stations survey findings. We are dealing with something altogether different here.

The news stories have focused on the President's net satisfaction rating. From negative 23 in the third quarter, it has fallen to negative 30 in the fourth quarter; it is Ms Arroyo's second-lowest "net" score ever. (In the second quarter, at the height of the jueteng hearings in the Senate, her rating plunged to negative 33.)

The real story, however, is in the actual numbers of "satisfied" and "dissatisfied" Filipinos of voting age. In the latest SWS survey, conducted from Nov. 27 to Dec. 4 (coinciding almost exactly with the duration of the 23rd Southeast Asian Games), 24 percent of the random sample of adult Filipinos said they were satisfied with the President's performance. This is down from the 30 percent recorded in the third quarter (the poll then was conducted in the last days of the impeachment drama in Congress).

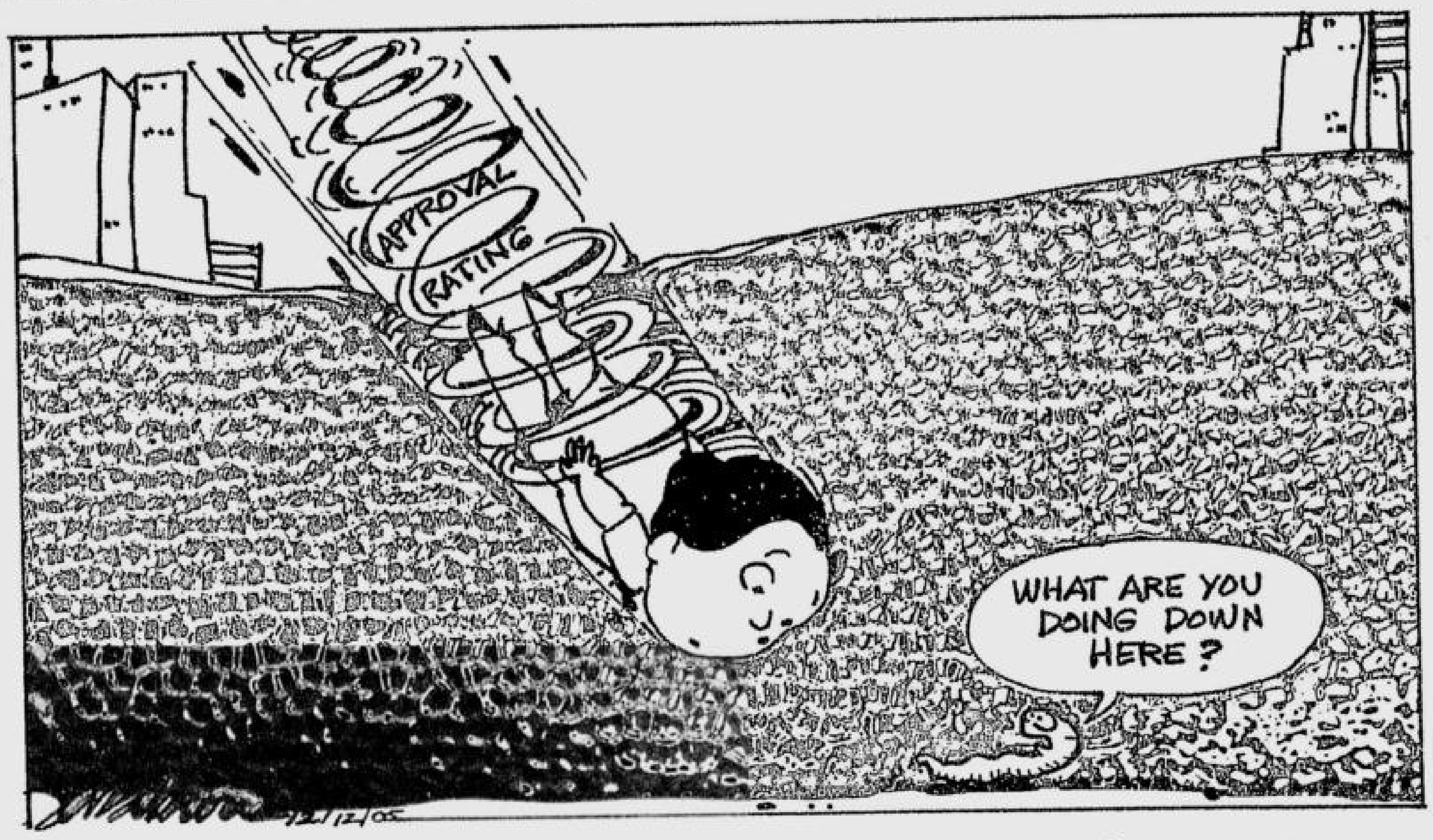
This is a major setback for the President. The actual (not merely statistical) loss of support came at a time when the string of good news in other sectors was expected, even by Malacañang, to immerse Ms Arroyo in a pool of good feeling. But the rise in the peso's value, the successive lowering of oil prices, the unexpectedly strong showing of the country's athletes in the SEA Games, none of these did the President any good, survey-wise.

The "dissatisfied" numbers are somewhat better, but only because they did not grow worse. From 53 percent in the third quarter, the President's dissatisfaction rating remained statistically steady at 54 percent. (The surveys have a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percent).

Another danger sign for Ms Arroyo: She is getting a shellacking in her main bailiwick, the Visayas provinces. From 40 percent in the third quarter, her satisfaction rating in the Visayas fell to 29; on the other hand, her dissatisfaction index went up from 40 to 45 percent. In language basketball aficionados will understand, one can say her Visayas numbers have suffered a 16-point swing.

Yet another danger sign: Her dissatisfaction rating from the so-called ABC demographic classes, which she could count on for support in the past, has risen from 46 to 50 percent—strictly speaking still within the margin of error, but a possible trend nevertheless, and one that should concern administration strategists who pin their hopes of political survival on an apathethic middle class.

Considering that the latest Pulse Asia survey also tends to show ever-bleaker numbers for the President (and given the fact that her survey performance in the run-up to last year's elections is one of the administration's proofs that it did not cheat), the SWS fourth-quarter survey must give the President and her allies pause. That poll was conducted at about the same time Virgilio Garcillano resurfaced; from where we sit, the results could not have been a coincidence.


APPROVAL RATING
WHAT ARE YOU DOING DOWN HERE?
12/12/05

RP not good enough for First Gentleman?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

FOR WINNING MEDALS IN THE RECENT Southeast Asian Games, 125 Filipino athletes will be treated by First Gentleman Mike Arroyo in a junket to some place where they can relax and enjoy themselves, all expenses paid. Where is he going to take them? To Hong Kong Disneyland!

Yes, sir, he's going to take a planeload of Filipino athletes, at considerable expense, to enjoy sights and rides in another country. Whatever happened to the "Wow Philippines!" of our Department of Tourism? Have these athletes seen all the beautiful tourist spots in the Philippines? I think not. And these Filipinos should see them first because they are beautiful—certainly much more than Hong Kong—like other tourist attractions in the world.

But such is the colonial mentality of our officials that they do not consider a pleasure trip a blowout unless it is made outside the Philippines. How can the DOT attract foreign tourists when it cannot even attract Filipinos—not even the First Gentleman of the land—to see our tourist spots? The Philippines is not good enough for athletes being given a blowout by Mr. Arroyo? Whatever happened to our slogan, "See the Philippines first?" Our FG is promoting tourism all right, but it is of another country.

Oh, he wants the athletes to enjoy the rides of Disneyland and suck lollipop just like he and Ate Glue did when they passed by there on the way home from Korea—dodging the Filipino domestic helpers who wanted to see Ate Glue. Disneyland has such a hypnotic attraction for the First Family that Ate Glue chose to disappoint the same OFWs whom she had called "modern heroes" because the earnings they have been sending home have kept our economy afloat and strengthened the peso—although she would boast now and then that these achievements are the results of her economic policies.

But Disneyland is just another Enchanted Kingdom, which is less than two hours drive from Malacañang. It is owned and operated by Filipinos and capitalized with Filipino pesos. The money spent there does not go out of the country and circulates right here, helping the Philippine economy grow. And believe me. Disneyland may be better known, but Enchanted Kingdom is world-class and can compare favorably with Disneyland and other theme parks in the world. Except the one in Paris, I have been to all the Disneylands—Anaheim, Tokyo, Orlando (the original Disneyland is only one small portion of Disney World in Orlando) and now Hong Kong—as well as to other theme parks in California and Florida; and I say that we need not be ashamed of our own Enchanted Kingdom. Hong Kong's Disneyland is the smallest of them all, and some of the best rides and attractions, such as the Pirates of the Caribbean, always one of the most popular among parkgoers, are not there.

In contrast, Enchanted Kingdom is always expanding and adding new attractions. Don't take my word for it, ask those who have been there. Or go there this Christmas season and see for yourself. See the spectacular fireworks. Has the First Family ever visited it? How will the economy grow when the First Family doesn't patronize our own attractions?

Congressmen, senators and Cabinet members also rush out to take their vacation in other countries, spending the taxes paid by Filipinos, but they rarely visit Philippine tourist spots. When they come back they talk about the sights and sounds of Singapore, America and Europe, but rarely about the beautiful sights and sounds of the Philippines. Then we complain that not enough foreign tourists come here.

We wouldn't need foreign tourists if Filipinos would only make it a point to "visit" their own country. The biggest chunk of tourists in Japan and America are domestic tourists. Why can't we have enough Filipino tourists visiting their own country?

* * *

It was International Human Rights Day last Saturday, Dec. 10. It should have reminded the world of the plight of those languishing in jail due to their political beliefs.

A friend sent me a note, reminding me that Erap is one such political prisoner. He said that by definition, Erap would qualify as a political prisoner for the following reasons:

"1. He is in detention because he refused the offer of exile by GMA when she unconstitutionally wrested power from him in 2001. After Edsa 2, then Justice Secretary Hernando Perez twice offered him exile with a threat of jail and prosecution if he refused. Erap refused and the threat was carried out.

"2. After the Supreme Court erred in swearing in GMA to replace Erap, despite the absence of a resignation letter (but too arrogant to admit its mistake), it then created a special court with one purpose: to try Erap. History tells us that special courts are special because of one thing: they ensure the conviction of the accused. Witness the Nuremberg trials or the special court that convicted General Yamashita or, of late, the special court that tried Milosevic of the former Yugoslavia.

"3. By historical precedents, special courts are created as a result of some catastrophic historical event, such as a war. Was the Philippines in the throes of uncontrolled violence the day Erap left Malacañang? Wasn't it precisely to prevent violence that Erap, like Marcos before him, opted to leave the Palace? The government of President Aquino did not create a special court to try Marcos. In the case of Erap, is the special court necessary because the case against him would not prosper in an ordinary court?"

I don't know the answer to that. But I understand that FREEDOM, an organization of civil libertarians, has filed a petition before the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, calling attention to the plight of Erap and 33 other political prisoners under Ate Glue.

The day the music died

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

"I CAN'T REMEMBER IF I CRIED/ WHEN I read about his widowed bride/ But something touched me deep inside/ The day the music died." Don McLean wrote that in "American Pie" as a tribute to Buddy Holly who died in a plane crash on Feb. 3, 1959. But for a whole generation of baby-boomers, that refers more appropriately to Dec. 8, 1980, when John Lennon was shot to death in one New York minute by a crazed assailant. That was the day the music died.

I can remember that I did not cry when I read about his widowed bride. Not being a great fan of anybody who tries to get ahead by treading too heavily on other people's names, I am not a great fan of Yoko Ono. But something truly touched me deep inside at the news that Lennon had been murdered for no apparent reason in New York and, as he lay dying in the wintry night, cried, "I've been shot." It was almost like a typical wryly humorous Lennon line. I remembered "A Day In the Life:" "He blew his mind out in the car/ He didn't notice that the lights had changed."

Looking back though, I don't know that the bullet that pierced Lennon's chest did not merely end prematurely and physically the life already slowly being extirpated in his soul. Lennon's decision to live in America, as Geoffrey Giuliano writes in his book, "Lennon in America," was disastrous. His creative wellsprings dried up. And his working-class political views, which batty fringe leftists in the United States did much to exploit, found barren soil there. Those views might have had a completely different fate in England, suggests Giuliano, given England's robust labor movement and hospitableness—as Europe generally was—to a wider range of ideologies. As it was, Lennon managed to capture only the imagination of the Federal Bureau of Investigation which kept a dossier on him and lobbied earnestly to have him expelled from the United States. What a boon those guys might have done the world if they had succeeded!

Except for songs like "Imagine," "Give Peace A Chance," "Happy Xmas (The War is Over)," and a handful of other songs, the Lennon genius could barely be glimpsed in the '70s. Of course, he was making a comeback shortly before he died, with an album bannered by the song appropriately titled "Starting Over." But I don't know that he could have recaptured old glory with it. I do know one thing, which is that for all the paucity of his post-Beatle work, rockers—not least in this country—still prefer him to Paul McCartney, who continued to be prolific long after. I myself like them both, and don't mind listening to McCartney's orchestral experimentations (the influence of George Martin, the so-called "Fifth Beatle") as much as Lennon's more basic, hard-driving, rock-and-roll. As well indeed as George Harrison's metaphysical musical and philosophical excursions, another instance of the conquered (India) culturally conquering the conqueror (England).

But like I said, Lennon was a pale replica of himself well before he died. One is tempted to say that the day the music died was not really December 1980 but the day "Abbey Road" was finished (that and not "Let It Be" was the last Beatles album). But I don't know there isn't a larger picture here. The dissolution of the Beatles, of course, was the end of a magical moment, but the end of the 1960s itself was the dissolution of a magical era. If I were to mark the day the music died, in a deeper sense it would have to be the day the 1960s drew to a close. I do not mean by that to disparage the musical contributions of succeeding generations (though I do know of baby boomers who would gladly do that); neither do I advocate relentless '60s retro, which we seem to be doing today, importing the aging and wasting pop music heroes of that time.

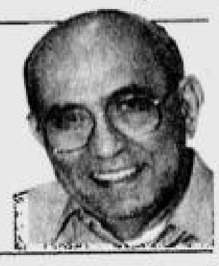
But the 1960s were the Camelot years, a decade of monumental ferment and iconoclastic upheaval, and the Beatles were right there at the front lines. They embodied its spirit of restless searching, or questing, in music that evolved (or revolved: one of their finest albums is called "Revolver") constantly, each album being quite unlike the other. It was an era that evoked Charles Dickens' opening lines in "A Tale of Two Cities," the best of times and the worst of times, the depths of Vietnam War and the height of the Civil Liberties Movement, the depths of prejudice and the heights of idealism, the depths of desperation and the heights of possibility. Indeed it was a decade that evoked Robert Browning's line: "A man's reach should exceed its grasp, or what's heaven for." It was a decade that reached for things that lay beyond its grasp.

Today, each time I see the movies and musical videos of that time—I just saw "Let It Be" and "Woodstock" again—I feel my eyes getting moist. It's not just nostalgia or a feeling of having lost time, it's neuralgia, a continuing pain from having lost something valuable. Three years after Lennon died, Lawrence Kasdan would give a voice to that loss for the baby boomers with the movie, "The Big Chill," the one movie that boosted the careers of Kevin Kline, Glenn Close, William Hurt et al. It tells of buddies who come together to attend the wake of a friend, who has just committed suicide. The occasion sparks a great deal of self-examination, and questions about whether the dead aren't luckier than the living, with all the compromises and betrayals and lapsing into mediocrity the latter have made of their lives.

Lennon died in 1980, but I don't know that he didn't start dying much earlier, and well before he left for distant shores. I don't know when exactly to date the day the music died for my generation, but I do know how it did. It went the way T.S. Eliot says the world will:

Not with a bang, but with a whimper.

Looking for a chief justice



SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

I CAME ACROSS A RECENT CARTOON DEPICTing two distinguished gentlemen discussing who should be chief justice of the US Supreme Court. One said to the other: "Color doesn't bother me, religion doesn't bother me, but I think a Supreme Court justice should be tall."

It used to be that all appointments to the judiciary had to go through the Commission on Appointments for confirmation. In fact, under the 1935 Constitution, all appointments made by the President were subject to confirmation or rejection by the Commission on Appointments. But Congress could by law authorize the appointment of "inferior officers" by the President alone or by the courts or by the heads of departments. The phrase "inferior officers" was not intended to be a pejorative term. It meant officers lower in rank than the President, judges or heads of departments.

During the deliberations of the 1986 Constitutional Commission, the draft presented for approval departed from the 1935 rule by providing that not all but only an enumerated number of officers would need confirmation. This was also a departure from the 1973 Constitution under which presidential appointments did not need any confirmation.

The reason for this new arrangement—which is now the law—was that, while the Constitutional Commission wanted to put a check on the appointing authority of the President as it was practiced under the 1973 Constitution, it also wanted to avoid the reported abuses of the Commission on Appointments under the 1935 system. Hence, the deliberations were focused on an attempt to fine-tune the list of officers whose appointment would need confirmation by the Commission on Appointments.

As we have it today, among those who do not need confirmation by the Commission Appointments are appointments to the judiciary from the lowest ranking judge to members of the Supreme Court. However, and here's the rub, appointments to the judiciary can be made only from a list of nominees chosen by the Judicial and Bar Council.

The purpose of the creation of the Judicial and Bar Council, which was a brainchild of former Chief Justice Roberto Concepcion, was to insulate the judicial appointment process from partisan influence. Witnesses appearing at the hearings, including former chief justices, affirmed that the "the major problem of the judiciary was political interference." However, if one looks at the composition of the Judicial and Bar Council, it is not difficult to imagine how political interference can come in.

The Council consists of three ex officio and four regular members. The ex officio members are the chief justice, who is chairman of the Council, the secretary of justice, and a member of Congress. There are four regular members who are appointed by the President but with the consent of the Commission on Appointments. As can readily be seen, the only one in the Council who does not need the blessing of political powers is the chief justice. In effect, the system has strengthened the hand of the President in the appointing process and has merely transferred political influence from the Commission on Appointments to the Office of the President.

The Judicial and Bar Council, aside from being chaired by the chief justice, is also under the supervision of the Supreme Court. This can only mean that it is not the chief justice alone who has influence on the nomination process because the chief justice is not the Supreme Court. It can happen, therefore, that the Supreme Court might become an exclusive "old boys" or "old girls" club through its influence on the Council.

It is in this light that lawyers and others are not entirely pleased with the decision of the Judicial and Bar Council not to subject the three nominees to the position of chief justice to a public interview. The choice of a chief justice is a matter of interest not just to the Judicial and Bar Council or the President, but also to the larger public.

The nation at the moment is confronted with difficult and novel issues whose resolution depend very much on the Supreme Court's thinking of what the Constitution means today. The Supreme Court's thinking is what the justices think. And of special interest is the thinking of the chief justice who can exert a strong influence on the direction of the Court. Today, many are thinking of the scope of the constitutional powers of the President in relation to both domestic and international issues.

True, the thinking of the nominees may be found in their decisions. But these are only available to lawyers and legal scholars. Besides, there are issues which, while calling for decisions now, are still awaiting resolution. Among these, in the domestic sphere, are the matter of executive privilege and the gag rule imposed by the President on executive officers. Likewise we are interested in how the Court will read the amendatory process of the Constitution. And in the international sphere, there is the ongoing debate on the powers of the President in the war against terrorism. So much is being said about this in current legal literature.

We do not expect the nominees to give categorical solutions to these issues during the hearings, but we would like to at least hear some hints of the direction of their constitutional thinking. It is the duty of the Judicial and Bar Council to present nominees to the President only after studying their suitability for a position. I am confident that an interview of the nominees will help the Council decide whether or not—or in what order—it would recommend the nominees.

Brick by brick

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Antonio J. Montalvan II

CHINA. WITH BOTH THE PAST AND MODERNIzation very much on its agenda, China has announced a novel technology that will be used in preserving its greatest relic. A specially fitted helicopter will be deployed to fly over the entire 5,000-kilometer length of the Great Wall of China. Through a specially manufactured scanner, the chopper will keep track of the number and dimension of all the bricks making up this behemoth of a treasure that is one of the world's greatest wonders.

Despite the amazing growth of its cities, China has given as much importance to the preservation of its heritage as it has to its modernization program. Just last week, government announced the discovery of yet another cultural relic: a rare 5-door imperial gate, the Gate of the Vermilion Phoenix built in the reign of a Tang Dynasty emperor, The new discovery was unearthed in the historic city of Xian, the capital of old China, home of the Terra Cotta Warriors that guarded the burial mound of Emperor Qin, China's first emperor, who started building the Great Wall. The Terra Cotta Museum is a popular destination for Chinese and international tourists.

The Vermilion Phoenix sits on a hill, where some houses are also located. In an impressive move, China announced it would demolish the houses after relocating the affected residents. Sadly, the cultural aggressiveness of a China that appreciates the soul of its nationhood is not something that we see in our country, whose only predilection seems to be its inutile politics of personalities.

Governance, in fact, is the focus of an international conference that Beijing hosted just over the week ago. The Network of Asia-Pacific Schools and Institutes of Public Administration and Governance (Napsipag) was organized in 2004 in Kuala Lumpur, with the cooperation of the Asian Development Bank. It seeks to enhance the quality of governance and public administration in the Asia-Pacific region through relevant and responsive training, education, and research.

Over 160 delegates from 27 countries attended the 2nd Napsipag gathering in Beijing, which included delegates from Central Asia's "stans"—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyztan, and Uzbekistan. I had gone to the Beijing meet, having in mind my cultural advocacies as part of public governance. Napsipag, in a way, had addressed the issue of multiculturalist governance during its first meeting in Kuala Lumpur in 2004.

A Filipino from Mindanao, Dr. Macapaldo A. Muslim, had espoused the cultural discourse of governance in that meet. The chancellor of Mindanao State University in General Santos City, Muslim argued for addressing cultural diversity as a top priority in reform initiatives in public governance. The trivialization of cultural heterogeneity in the societal context is a fundamental flaw in Philippine governance. The Philippine dilemma is having a government that does not imbue us with a soul and identity.

Only the intervention of local cultural advocates in the private sector and in the academe (though many remain as accomplices of government apathy) is saving the day for Filipino cultural heritage. Yet, even the cultural advocacy sector is composed of disparate groups whose concern is usually limited to their respective localities. As I have said before in this column, things have been made worse by national culture agencies that are very much "Manila-centric" and, for the most part, do not listen to the voices coming from the grassroots. On top of that is the national government's lack of political will in embedding cultural advocacy and diversity in the system of governance.

Napsipag is certainly a small step towards good governance. But it recognizes the fact that to achieve its goal, bureaucrats in the lower echelon of government should be made to undergo relevant trainings, with emphasis on the cultural characteristics of each member country. Towards this end, Napsipag's Beijing conference focused on schools and institutions and their programs, particularly those relating to governance; also, on enlarging citizen participation and greater local autonomy. Instead of a marathon reading of papers as is the wont in many such conferences, the organization steered the plenary sessions towards the sharing of ideas, enabling delegates to expound on individual innovations that member countries can certainly learn from without imposing on local cultural peculiarities.

For the Beijing meet, the Philippines was ably represented by stalwarts in the public governance academe. They were Luvismin Aves (Capitol University), Val Baac (University of Santo Tomas), Victoria Bautista (UP Open University), Ernesto Bumatay (UP Los Baños), Nenita Dayrit (UP Extension Program in Pampanga), Mely del Rosario (University of Santo Tomas), Marlon and Belinda Era (De La Salle University), Eduardo Gonzales (Development Academy of the Philippines), Lilibeth Juan (UP Center for Leadership, Citizenship and Democracy), Magdalena Mendoza (Development Academy of the Philippines), Emily Pacoy (University of Southeastern Philippines), Ester Raagas (Xavier University-Ateneo de Cagayan), Eleazar Ricote (Jose Rizal University), and Estelita Tucay (Nueva Vizcaya State University).

Public servants, no matter how lowly their rank may be, are like the bricks in the Great Wall of China. Spotlighting them brick by brick is one hope that, thanks to Napsipag and the Asian Development Bank, our disparate worlds of governance must eventually come together.

Comments to monta@cu-cdo.edu.ph

Communications and parties

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

LAST FRIDAY, THE THIRD PANEL DISCUSSION in a two-day conference was held. The panel discussion was about communications and campaigning; and it was part of the First Asian Political Parties Workshop on Efficient Party Management, co-sponsored by Centrist Democratic International Asia-Pacific and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. (In case you're wondering who the Centrist Democrats are, they're what the Christian Democrats have decided to rename themselves). I had the privilege of moderating the discussion which was participated in by Amarjargal Rinchinnyam (former prime minister of Mongolia and currently an MP), Ung Huot (deputy secretary-general of the Funcincpec Party in Cambodia), and Pawan Khera (political secretary to the chief minister of Delhi).

Amarjargal discussed communications from a reformist point of view. He recounted the seesawing electoral experience of his party (which took over from the communism in 1990; defeated by ex-communists in 1992; won again in 1996; defeated in 2000; obtained a tie in 2004), which suffered from a handicap his former communist opponents didn't have. According to him, democracy and a market economy are good, but are hard to defend if both aren't backed by concrete results. On the other hand, communism or post-communist Socialism had a built-in excuse for its failure: there are so many internal and external factors that can be denounced as impeding Socialism. He further suggested that there's a rule of thumb reformist politicians ought to learn early: sometimes the public doesn't want to hear the truth.

Two views of the Mongolian speaker struck me in particular. The first was: political parties today face a challenge; NGOs and civil society, and other "non-membership party organizations" exercise many of the functions formerly performed by parties. These non-party entities, which increasingly play an important role in politics, pose a challenge: what is left for parties to do?

His other observation concerned Grand Coalitions in parliamentary systems (his reformist party and the party of the ex-communists each won exactly 50 percent of the seats; in Germany a similar thing happened recently, resulting for a while in a political paralysis). He said Grand Coalitions work only when there is a consensus on big, strategic issues; if the partners in the coalition are only interested in the splitting of positions down the line, the coalition is almost guaranteed to break down the moment some party functionary gets upset somewhere.

Ung Huot discussed the highly scientific methods he used in figuring out how to "sell" his party to voters in 1993, when Cambodia had elections organized and supervised by the United Nations. To the "Four P's" (Product, Placement, Promotions, Prices—or in political terms, Prizes), he added a critical fifth: Planning, which he says has to begin on the day after the elections, if the party is to win the next. Suggesting that "governments never lose elections, the opposition only wins elections," he emphasized the need for parties to craft messages that are short, straight to the point, and understood by the majority of voters.

Khera disagreed with the Cambodian: governments, he said, can win and not merely stave off defeat. He suggested that effective campaigning requires politicians to be "dream merchants." He didn't believe parties can ensure success by trumpeting their achievements. For example, in Delhi, the Congress Party government built 60 flyovers in five years: but the electorate, he said, didn't view it as an achievement; instead, it saw them as things the government owed them. Which meant that to be reelected, the party must tell voters how it would solve the traffic situation (and not what it had done to alleviate traffic thus far).

He was also emphatic about the dangers of confusing message delivery with what politics calls for: communication that is one-sided. The Congress Party wrested control from the incumbent BJP Party, among other things, because the BJP prime minister relied on advertising and sending text messages and programming prerecorded phone calls, which voters found arrogant. In contrast, Sonia Gandhi had her party go on "road shows," in which candidates interacted with voters. He also discussed how regular dialogue helps address criticism and allows voters to let off steam, which means, whatever the record of the party, voters are less likely to hold grudges against leaders come election time. In the end, he said, Indian voters can forgive many things, but arrogance isn't one of them—and all too often, politicians forget that a great part of their success depends on their ability to listen.

Parties, Khera suggested, cannot consider the electorate consumers to be manipulated according to marketing strategies. There's no substitute for face-to-face interaction; and there's the need not only for effective communicators to have charisma, but for this to be replicated throughout the organization: top-down campaigns are weak; campaigns that delegate authority succeed.

The discussion was so interesting that Sec. Heherson Alvarez only fell asleep twice—for a couple of minutes each time. Questions from the floor were quite challenging and promoted vigorous debate. Each of the speakers provided useful case studies of how countries facing challenges, similar to the ones we're faced with, have tried to build stronger parties while responding to traditional challenges (poverty, weak institutions) and coping with new problems, such as the increasingly dominant role of mass media (which provide opportunities but incur gigantic campaign costs.)

Values Education at every opportunity

COMMENTARY

Eugenia Duran Apostol

LAST FRIDAY, DEC. 9, THE EXECUTIVE STAFF OF THE Foundation for Worldwide People Power (FWWPP) met with Dr. Isagani R. Cruz, one-time education undersecretary, well known equally for his expertise in the field of Values Education.

We wanted to update Dr. Cruz on the Education Revolution, a movement the FWWPP launched in 2002. This fledgling advocacy calls for a concerted effort—People Power style—to stem Philippine education's continuing decline.

To date, the Education Revolution's Adopt-A-School Community Action program has facilitated the adoption of over 200 schools in Metro Manila, Pampanga, Laguna and other areas. In Negros Occidental alone, regional coordinator Ayen Tolentino has formed 62 adoption groups, composed of respected members of the community, NGOs and churches.

The Education Revolution has also successfully fostered meaningful change from within the teaching community through the Mentoring the Mentors program. This innovative five-day on-site seminar is composed of highly intensive and interactive sessions to reinforce the teachers' critical role in shaping their students' characters. Over 2,000 participants, from regional superintendents to principals and master teachers from various public schools, have experienced Mentoring the Mentors and can attest to its overall effectiveness.

Those gains however are admittedly modest when taken in the context of the Philippine Education system, which has about half a million teachers, 41,000 schools and a national enrolment of about 18 million students.

The results of the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS, formerly known as the Third International Mathematics and Science Study) held in 2003, which the INQUIRER published recently, starkly illustrate the decline of the quality of Philippine Education.

In that study, the Math and Science scores of fourth grade students from the Philippines were barely enough for 23rd place among 25 participating countries. Our fourth year high school students in turn placed 40th in a field of 45 countries in Math, and 43rd in a field of 46 in Science. TIMSS data have been collected in 1995, 1999 and 2003. The United States will next collect TIMSS data in 2007.

The crisis facing Philippine education is already out in the open, but learning outcomes form only part of the picture. What about the school's inherent role in the formation of positive civic values among our youths.

You see, private foundations and NGOs, including the FWWPP, have made substantial donations to help meet the quite enormous resource gaps that our public schools face every year. In 2004 for instance, Corporate Giving for Education was estimated at P1.2 billion. Unfortunately, all this philanthropy loses luster when our schools still turn out unskilled graduates who have a vague appreciation of citizenhood and a weak understanding of democratic principle.

In fact, better resources alone do not necessary mean quality education. Remember Lope De Vega High School? Despite the lack of facilities, the students of this Samar high school topped the most recent National Achievement Tests because the entire community committed itself to making quality education its top priority.

This resonates strongly with the FWWPP mandate which is, to paraphrase the late Ambassador Narciso G. Reyes, "not a mere change of regimes, but rather a systemic change, a real social transformation."

Dr. Cruz reasoned that opportunities to imbibe positive civic values should permeate throughout the learner's entire experience in school and, ideally, should be reinforced at home. In fact, the new Basic Education Curriculum, more popularly referred to as the Makabayan Curriculum, calls for precisely this. Every subject (i.e. English, Math, Science, Filipino and Makabayan) is treated as an avenue for introducing concepts like honesty, integrity and respect for the rights of others. In his book, "The Basic Education Curriculum in 17 Easy Steps," Dr. Cruz shows examples of how the teacher can do this.

If a child brings a deck of cards, the teacher doesn't have to frown, she can use the cards to teach her pupils numbers. If a child brings a comic book, that's a chance for the teacher to teach narrative. If the child brings a dirty toy, why, they can have a lesson in hygiene and when cleaned, the toy becomes huggable.

One innovation that the FWWPP will be introducing for the coming school year is the local mobilization framework developed by Joel Pagsanghan. Billed as Education Revolution 2006, this framework hopes to initiate the idea of performance-based support, where the school community sits down and plans for its own success.

Many corporate foundations have items like books and serviceable computers that they would like to donate to public schools. However, they hesitate to do so because they are not sure if these would actually be used to improve learning outcomes. Their apprehension is quite real; there have been quite a number of instances where donations like this end up not being used by the school at all because no one in the faculty is qualified to teach computer concepts or there is no item for a qualified librarian.

On the other hand, a school community implementing Education Revolution 2006 stands a better chance of unlocking these resources because it can show to the resource holders that it actually has an education-focused strategic plan and the particular resource sought is contingent on this plan.

For example, it makes sense that a particular school solicits donations for books if its teachers have activities that promote a love for reading. Ms Neni Sta. Romano Cruz of the Sa Aklat Sisikat Foundation designed and set up an honest to goodness children's library in Sampaloc Site Elementary School which she and her husband Efren adopted two years ago. She then helped the teachers of that school implement a simple reading program using the books she donated. In this context, book donations are a necessary resource.

As you can see the support (i.e. the books) is based on performance (i.e. implementation of the reading program). In effect, the school community's need is "demand driven." From the resource holder's perspective, this is not a simple dole-out; it is a reciprocating activity that will generate tangible results (i.e. pupils who are better readers).

The possibilities are limited only by the school community's collective creativity.

Dr. Cruz pointed out that Education Revolution 2006 lends itself well to promoting positive civic values, not the least of which is a sense of community. By showing to potential donors they share the aims of this advocacy, the school community is sending a very strong message that it is firmly committed to providing its youth with a future filled with the opportunities that a good education brings.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

What the Thais meant

THE THAIS' SKEPTICISM ABOUT THE medals that Filipinos won in the Southeast Asian Games is but an indicator of how little credibility we have as a people. Rather than vindicate us, the fact that some of the competitions such as swimming, fencing and running cannot be rigged (without the collusion of non-Filipino players) actually serves to highlight this lack of trust in the Filipinos' ability to act honestly.

For sure, the Thais' accusation is extremely offensive. It was made worse by the fact that the statement came from a normally mild-mannered people. Moreover, their prime minister defied diplomatic niceties and added his own negative comments.

Our standing in the world community has reached an all-time low. However, given that Macapagal-Arroyo considers her conversations with "a Comelec official" as a mere "lapse in judgement," and she is now admonishing us to just "move on," can we blame the Thais?

—ANA MARIA G. BALAYON,
anabalpbpf@gmail.com

Survey findings favor GMA?

I WONDER HOW BELINDA OLIVARES-Cunanan reached the conclusion that the Pulse Asia survey, covering the period Oct. 15-27, was "frustrating to GMA's opponents." (PDI, 11/19/05)

To begin with, Pulse Asia's latest survey showed that "around 1 in 2 Filipinos (52 percent) is outrightly critical" of President Macapagal-Arroyo. So, it was quite a stretch for Cunanan to claim that the President's critics, including Senate President Franklin Drilon, must be bothered by the survey results.

Why would Drilon be frustrated by the Pulse Asia poll when it found him with the highest net approval rating of 25 percent among all national government officials? Surely, Drilon's high rating can be taken as an encouragement from the people for the Senate president and Liberal Party head to pursue his quest for the truth on the many scandals whirling around the Arroyo administration, whose legitimacy is under serious doubt due to accusations of poll fraud.

The thumbs-up Drilon received also reflected the people's sentiment that in this government, only the Senate remains as a bastion of decency.

In contrast, Speaker Jose de Venecia, a zealous defender of Ms Arroyo, got only a 2 percent net approval rating in the survey. This speaks volume on the people's view of the unceremonious killing of the impeachment complaints against the President.

It should be noted that 53 percent of those surveyed felt that the impeachment complaint should have been discussed more thoroughly by the House. In fact, 31 percent of the respondents said the complaint should have been elevated to the Senate "so that the truth may be revealed."

Chief Justice Hilario Davide received a 4 percent net approval rating, something which did not reflect kindly on the judiciary as an institution.

—RENATO EUGENIO,
17 San Rafael St., Pasig City

One small effort for a great future

I READ WITH INTEREST ASUNcion David Maramba's article "For every family, a scholar." (PDI, 11/25/05)

I went to the United States for the first time in July 2005 and saw for myself the beauty, the progress, the grandeur and the affluence of that country. When I came back after a month, having realized the very wide gap between the economies of our two countries, I felt sorry for the Philippines.

My heart bleeds because in my very hometown of Paete, Laguna, many poor families are in need of financial support just to be able to send their children to high school. In an effort to help my poor but deserving *kababayans*, I initiated a scholarship fund to support students at the Poten and Eliseo M. Quesada Memorial National High School in Paete. I called it the $20 Club. Each member will donate $20 and the money will be used to finance one scholar for one whole year in high school. The club is composed of generous friends and relatives from abroad who believe in the project. But it is very heartwarming to know that even our middle class *kababayans* here in the Philippines also have opened their doors to help these students. Initially, I was only targetting 20 members so we could send 20 scholars for the school year 2006. But the outpouring of support and enthusiasm of the people who want to help has been so overwhelming. In our second month last Nov. 28, the $20 Club could already count on 171 members!

—SAIDA CAGANDAHAN DULAY,
saida@paete.org

Undiplomatic remark

IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT THAI Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra made those undiplomatic remarks suggesting that the Philippines cheated in the SEA Games. I find the remarks offensive, especially coming from the leader of a country whose people are considered almost like brothers by most Filipinos.

It was appalling that Mr. Thaksin's hastily made an unsubstantiated conclusion without first asking for a full report from Mr. Chaipak Siriwat, Thai Olympic Council representative, who was attending the Games. In an interview, Chaipak offered apologies, saying he was completely taken by surprise by Mr. Thaksin's statement, and was bothered by what he called a "senseless report" from Bangkok that had no basis in fact.

Thai spokesperson Surapong Suebwonglee also cited the case of the Thai runner who was reportedly blocked and lost the gold to a Filipino runner. But he did not care to say that the Filipino who was involved in that incident was disqualified and the gold was awarded to the Thai runner.

If Mr. Thaksin was concerned about fairness in the Games, it should have also given him some concern that two Thai aquatics referees were sanctioned by the FINA offcials from New Zealand and Iran for shady officiating.

Criticisms are welcome but unfounded ones that tend to destroy the goodwill and fellowship in the community of nations (which are what the Games are all about) definitely have no place in a great sports event.

—CESAR M. DE LOS REYES
cesdlrey@i-manila.com.ph

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2 dead in coal mine collapse in Cebu

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—A COAL MINE EXplosion Saturday night in southern Cebu killed two miners and left six other miners still trapped in the tunnel of the mine located in a mountain village in Dalaguete town, around 85 kilometers from here.

The eight miners were on their way out of the 490-meter tunnel when an explosion occurred at around 7:10 p.m., according to Dalaguete police investigator PO3 Cleto Pia.

The two fatalities were closer to the entrance and were immediately retrieved by their fellow miners. But the six others remained trapped after about 50 tons of coal collapsed into the middle of the tunnel following the explosion, according to Dalaguete Mayor Ronald Alan Cesante.

Cesante said their initial investigation showed that the explosion was caused by trapped methane gas, which exploded because of lack of ventilation or blower inside the tunnel.

The coal mine, owned by the Taiwanese firm Ibalong Resources Development Corp., is located in Barangay Dumalan, a mountain village some 25 km from the town proper.

This was the second accident to hit the coal mine this year. Six months ago, the supporting beams of the tunnel also collapsed because of heavy downpour, killing one miner, Pia said.

The fatalities in this latest accident were identified as Boyet Geraldez, 25 of Inayagan, Naga and Henrino Zuniega, 23, of Dumalan, Dalaguete.

Those still trapped at the tunnel were Francisco Ybañez, 43, of Barangay Dumalan; Nelson Villasis, 39, of Negros Oriental; Jaime Sanchez, 42, of Dumalan; Manuel Lanogan, 45, of Canlawilao, Dalaguete; Antonio Jose, 37, of Ablayan, Dalaguete; and Gregorio Amad, 35, of Ablayan, Dalaguete.

Cesante said he feared for the safety of the six trapped miners because they have been inside the tunnel for almost 24 hours.

4 journalists face arrest from libel case filed by judge

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—FOUR JOURNALists here are facing arrest after the court in Koronadal City issued arrest warrants against them in connection with the libel charges filed by a judge.

The libel case stemmed from an article written by Alejandro "Bong" Reblando, Manila Bulletin correspondent, who is also writing for the local weekly tabloid The South Cotabato Forum.

The article was about the alleged illicit love affair of Koronadal City Regional Trial Court branch 24 Judge Oscar Dinopol with one of his court employees.

Also accused were Giovanni Flaviano, editor/publisher of South Cotabato Forum; Santos Daradar, managing editor; and Jerry Adlaw, associate editor.

The court set a P10,000 bail each for the temporary liberty of the accused.

Reblando said they have submitted a petition before the Department of Justice asking for a reinvestigation of the case.

He said he had no intention to tarnish the image of Dinopol as he was merely reporting a legitimate issue which concerns public interest.

The court administrator of the Supreme Court directed Dinopol to answer the charges filed by Hugolino Balayon Jr., a lawyer in Koronadal City, who accused the judge of gross ignorance of the law and misconduct, he added.

Balayon filed the administrative complaint on Sept. 21, 2004 and is pending with the Office of Court Administrator of the Supreme Court.

Reblando urged the judge not be onion-skinned when it comes to his conduct as public official.

He said he welcomed the libel case as he was aware it is part of the risks involved in journalistic profession.

The INQUIRER tried but failed to get the side of Dinopol. *Aquiles Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Activist buried on rights day

SAMAL, BATAAN—THE INTERNATIONAL HUman Rights Day here on Saturday was marked by sorrow and outrage as some 3,000 people gathered to bury a leader of the Kilusan para sa Pambansang Demokrasya, the 25th victim of extra-judicial killings in Central Luzon since September.

Mourners at 10 a.m. gathered at the gate of the Country Resort in Barangay Gabon in Abucay town to recite prayers, offer roses and light candles on the spot where Kathy Alcantara, KPD-Bataan secretary general, was shot dead on Dec. 5.

Prof. Roland Simbulan and Cora Fabros of the Nuclear-Free Philippines Coalition hailed the crucial role that Alcantara played in the campaign against the construction and operation of the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant in Morong town from 1980 until former President Corazon Aquino ordered it closed after she assumed power in 1986.

The mourners marched along a 6-km stretch toward this town and carried posters that read, "Justice for Kathy! Justice for all victims of extra-judicial killings in Central Luzon!"

The string of murders had claimed the lives of 24 leaders and members of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, its affiliate organizations and party-list groups Bayan Muna and Anakpawis, according to the human rights group Karapatan.

Alcantara was the first KPD leader killed, according to KPD national secretary general Millet Morante.

Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

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ConCom pressed to prioritize S&T

CALAMBA CITY—AS THE DEC. 15 DEADline for the Consultative Commission (ConCom) to wrap up its reports draws near, scientists and researchers last week asked ConCom members to give primacy to the development of science and technology (S&T) in the country by prioritizing fiscal reforms for the sector.

In a position paper, the policy advocacy group of the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development said fiscal support for the S&T sector would play a vital role in the national government's aim to achieve stable economic development.

"Now, more than ever, is the time to support S&T to achieve a better socioeconomic status for the country so we can move to our loftier goals," the group said.

The group lamented that although past administrations have recognized the importance of S&T, they failed to institutionalize fiscal support for research and development.

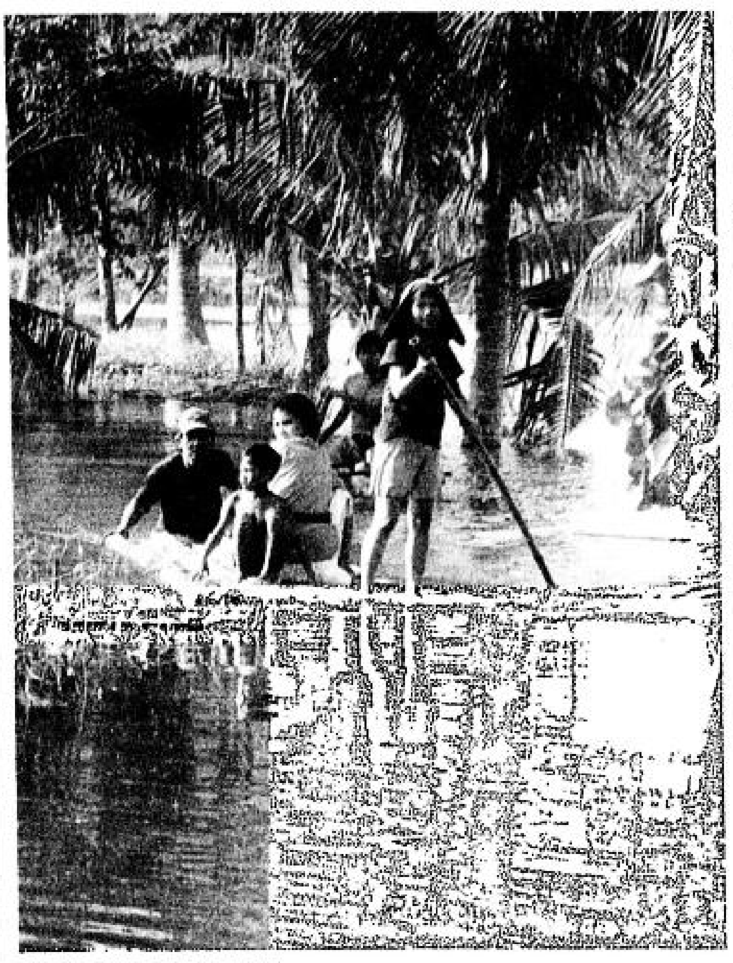
"In the best interest of both the present and future generations, advancement in S&T should be accorded high priority in the Constitution in terms of policy decision and fiscal support," the group said.

The paper, done in behalf of the Philippine National Agricultural Research System, was also presented during the ConCom consultation held in Los Baños, Laguna last Nov. 22.

The group said the country's leaders should be reminded that S&T is vital in alleviating poverty by stabilizing food supply, stimulating economic growth and improving job opportunities.

At present, financial support for S&T accounts for only 0.11 percent of the country's growth domestic product, the group said.

It said the national government should allot at least one percent of the gross domestic product for research and development if it does not want to face bigger problems arising from population increase and decline in food supply. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



KEEPING AFLOAT RUDY ESPERAS

A family in Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro make their way out of isolation with a raft after a flash flood caused by heavy rains and a collapsed dam submerged the city last week.

Priest runs for natives of Palawan

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—RUNNING priest Robert Reyes joined the members of displaced indigenous people in a march last Dec. 9.

Reyes, known for expressing his views on different issues by running, arrived in the city upon the invitation of the Palawan diocese's Committee of Special Social Concerns.

After a press conference, the running priest joined members of the displaced Palawan and Molbog folk, who are members of the Samahan ng mga Katutubo sa Dulong Timog ng Palawan (Organization of Indigenous Peoples in Far Southern Palawan or Sambilog) along with other priests, students and non-government groups to protest the decision of the provincial board and call for public support to the plight of the IPs.

Sambilog has sought the help of the provincial board and the court to annul an ordinance in Balabac town creating a marine eco-region by saying that it favored the operations of a pearl farm and unfairly blocked the access of indigenous communities to their traditional fishing grounds.

The ordinance covers the entire 300,000-hectare municipal waters of Balabac, specified 28,000 hectares, including the pearl farm, as a strict protection zone, meaning no human activity could take place in the area.

The provincial board has decided during its regular session not to tackle the issues raised by the IPs because the group had filed a petition in court seeking for the annulment of the ordinance.

Meanwhile, a protest art exhibit featuring the situation of indigenous peoples in Balabac opened last Dec. 5 at the Palawan Museum.

Dubbed "Panaghoy ng Balabac," the exhibit was conceptualized by the Concerned Artists For the Environment (Café), a loose coalition of artists in Palawan.

The exhibit, which will run until Dec. 12, featured the works of Palawan's home-grown artists like Robert Bagalay, Jonathan Benitez, Frances Mendoza-Esa, H. Dan Habaradas, Mario Lubrico Jr., Dinggot Conde-Prieto, Claudette Ensomo-Sendaydiego, Kanz Ponce de Leon.

"Panaghoy ng Balabac" will have a second run in Manila on the last week of January next year. *Jofelle Tesorio, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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BIGYAN BUHAY ANG PAGMAMAHAL

Negros workers press for payment of allowances

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—GOVERNMENT employees in Western Visayas are demanding the release of their unpaid cost of living allowance (Cola) from 1989 to 1999 amounting to around P60,000 per employee.

The government employees led by the Western Visayas All-Government Employees' Cola Coalition and the Confederation for the Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees (Courage) said the release of the unpaid allowance would help cushion the impact of rising prices of commodities and services.

Employees of government agencies started wearing black shirts on Dec. 2 to press for the release of the allowance. They planned to continue their protest every Friday until their demands are met.

They were pushing for the application to all government employees of the Sept. 6 Supreme Court ruling on a case filed by employees of the Philippine Ports Authority against the Commission on Audit.

The ruling said the employees are entitled to their Cola from July 1, 1989 to March 16, 1999.

Republic Act No. 6758 or the Salary Standardization Law, which took effect on July 1, 1989, provides for the consolidation of allowances and compensation including the Cola into the basic salary of government employees.

But the Department of Budget and Management failed to inform the employees of the integration of the Cola to the basic pay by way of publication.

The DBM only published circulars on the incorporation of the allowances to the basic pay on March 16, 1999 and on May 3, 2004.

The Supreme Court said the Cola and the amelioration allowance were not effectively integrated into the standardized salaries of government employees because of the failure to publish the circulars.

It said that all PPA employees and not only incumbents as of July 1, 1989 should be allowed to receive the back Cola pay. The non-incumbents were those hired after July 1, 1989 or those who retired from the service within the 10-year period.

President Macapagal-Arroyo on Sept. 9 ordered the DBM to release P1 billion for initial payments of the unpaid Cola but a DBM circular dated Oct. 26 prohibited the payment of the allowance to employees of national government agencies because it said the Cola was already integrated into the basic salary.

Firm drills for oil, gas in Cebu

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—AN OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION has started since Wednesday in a mountain village of Olango, Aloguinsan, 73 km southwest of here, energy and town officials revealed on Saturday.

The exploration is being conducted by Gas To Grid (GTG), a Manila-based company, to reassess the gas and oil deposits that were first discovered in the area in the 1960s, according to engineer Eduardo Amante, chief of the Energy Resources Development and Utilization Division of the Department of Energy in Central Visayas.

"The company is now conducting a drilling operation of the old well in Barangay Olango, Aloguinsan," Amante said.

Barangay Olango is around 14 kilometers from Aloguinsan town proper. The drilling of the well has reached a depth of 2,748 meters, Amante said.

Amante said the old well was discovered to have deposits of gas and oil in the 1960s but no investors were interested then because it was not considered commercially viable because of the then low price of oil and gas.

Amante said the GTG is more interested in determining the gas deposits in the area.

Aloguinsan Mayor Cynthia Moreno said they were supporting the project in the hope that it could result to the development of their town.

Amante said the DoE had approved the project through a service contract entered into with the GTG. Under the contract, GTG can conduct the drilling operation until 2011 or for seven years. GTG, with the support of its Australian investors, had put up around $3 million for the project, he said.

Negros Occ. execs dispute gov't data

BACOLOD CITY—Negros Occidental officials have disputed a National Statistics' Coordination Board (NSCB) report placing their province 27th in the list of 44 poorest provinces in the Philippines.

The ranking of Negros Occidental was identified in a report by Presentacion Penpillo of the NSCB in Western Visayas during the meeting on Dec. 7 of the Negros Occidental Provincial Development Council at the Capitol here.

The report also showed Capiz 11th among the poorest provinces, Aklan 39th and Antique 41st.

Penpillo said the ranking was based on a report released by the NSCB in 2003.

Outdated

When Negros Occidental mayors questioned how the NSCB came up with its findings, Penpillo said the figure was based on data they gathered at the municipal and city levels.

Gov. Joseph Marañon said he found the data outdated and unreflective of the progress in social services made over four years.

"The data used for ranking Negros Occidental in No. 27 was from 2000 and 2001, and we are now entering 2006 so it does not reflect the present situation," Marañon said.

"We have implemented a lot programs to address malnutrition and poverty," he added.

Marañon said he asked Penpillo for a more current report on the poverty situation so the provincial government could address the problem properly. *Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

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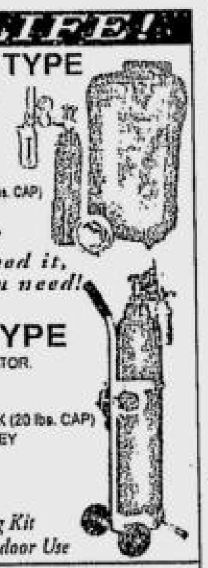

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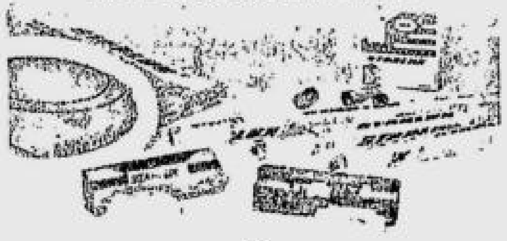

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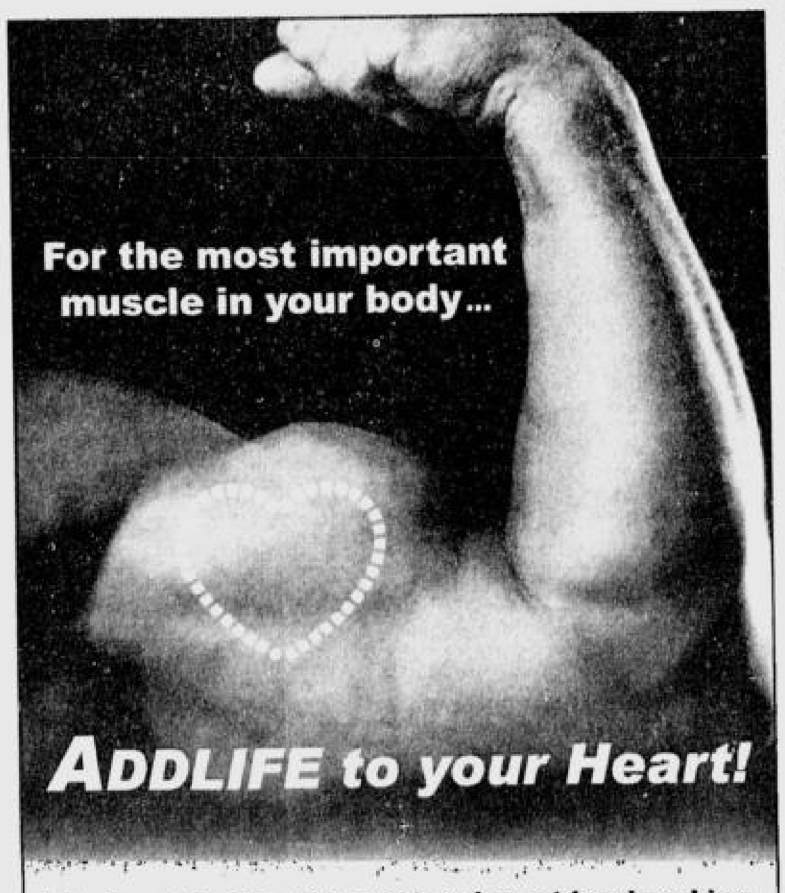
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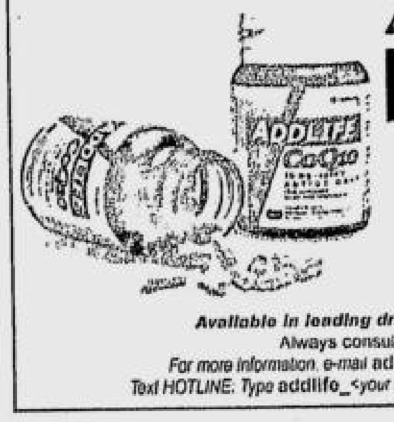

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Romblon lass wins P6M in prizes in reality TV show

From page A1

"I will put the money to good use," Nene Tamayo, 24, told INQUIRER Entertainment in Filipino an hour after she won the pot, besting three other housemates with the number of text votes she garnered from televiewers that night.

"This is so overwhelming, and my mind is still a blank," the petite but gutsy lass from Romblon said. "Of course, I will help my family. But I will put half of the money in the bank."

"Pinoy Big Brother" was the first reality show on Philippine television where 13 housemates (contestants) lived together for 100 days in front of 26 cameras, fulfilled tasks assigned by an authority figure called "Big Brother," and generally bonded with each other.

Every week, a housemate would nominate to Big Brother another housemate for eviction. Viewers would then vote for the housemate they wanted to keep in the house.

As millions of viewers stayed tuned to their sets to savor the emotional moments leading to the announcement of the big winner, more than a million sent in their votes. About half of the votes were for Nene, who garnered a total of 554,906 text votes (48.9 percent).

NENE TAMAYO

Nene won over housemates Jayson Gainza, 25, of Batangas, who received 312, 258 votes (27.5 percent). Cassandra "Cass" Ponti, 22, of Davao, came in third with 214,188 votes (18.9 percent) and Uma Barum Khouny, 24, who's half-Israeli, placed fourth, with 52,833 votes (4.7 percent).

Jayson, a former overseas contract worker and one of two married housemates with two children, won P300,000 in cash. Cass, a former model, and Uma will each receive P200,000.

"This victory is for all of us," Nene declared, referring to the other housemates and a marginalized *masa*—where she came from before gaining popularity as a PBB housemate.

Big night

A continuous downpour did not dampen the big night on PBB, which was telecast live from the Expo stadium.

As early as 4 p.m., the stadium was brimming with people—about 30,000 of them—who struggled their way into the stadium's best seats.

The big night started at 9 p.m. with Willie Revillame, Toni Gonzaga and Mariel Rodriguez hosting the event.

It opened with a parade of children from the local public school and songs from the UP Concert Chorus.

Building up the excitement toward. the announcement of the winners were performances from guests Robert Seña, Jed Madela, Rachel Anne Go, Sarah Geronimo, Sandara Park, Joseph Bitangcol, Orange and Lemons, Andrew E., Carlos Agassi, Jericho Rosales, Heart Evangelista, John Estrada, Randy Santiago and the former housemates, led by the newest Star Movies contract actor Sam Milby.

Dark horse

A dark horse since the start of the competition in the real-life drama, Nene was nowhere as popular as the last evicted housemate Franzen Fajardo, the confessed "*jologs*" in whom the *masa* saw an underdog and themselves.

Nene was touted as most likely to win after Franzen was evicted.

But she posed a real threat to the popular Uma, who admitted to Big Brother during the last nomination night that he had given Nene his two points vote for eviction because she was a formidable opponent.

"Pinoy Big Brother," after all, was a contest where the toughest housemate would win a total of P6 million in cash and prizes.

In the 111 days that Nene stayed inside the PBB house built as a set for the show across the ABS-CBN studios and offices on Eugenio Lopez Drive in Quezon City, she showed how tough she was. She took on a leadership stance and the bigger responsibilities in the tasks assigned to the housemates by the authoritarian Big Brother, an unseen presence in the house, who manifested himself only during "confession time" through his big, booming voice.

(INQUIRER Entertainment learned that Big Brother was actually a disc jockey, whose face would never be seen in front of the camera as a global policy of Endemol, the Netherland-based television production company that "invented" the concept of "Pinoy Big Brother" as entertainment.)

Nene still has to adjust to having money, property, fame and a possible show biz career the morning after she won the reality-based contest. Overwhelmed by all this, Nene told INQUIRER Entertainment in an exclusive backstage interview on Saturday night that the first thing she wants to do is go home to Romblon and reunite with her family. Show biz, she says, is something she still has to think about.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, December 12, 2005
Our Lady of Guadalupe
1st Reading: Zec 2:14-17
2nd Reading: Rom 8:28-30
Gospel: Luke 2:15-19

When the angels had left them and gone back to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go as far as Bethlehem and see what the Lord has made known to us." So they came hurriedly and found Mary and Joseph with the baby lying in the manger. On seeing this they related what they had been told about the child, and all were astonished on hearing the shepherds. As for Mary, she treasured all these messages and continually pondered over them.

Commentary

Sing and rejoice O daughter of Zion, I am about to come! I shall dwell among you! Today is the feast of the poor indigenous woman who stands with her feet on the earth with music and abundant life all around her. As angels came to shepherds who came to her, she is the angel and the shepherd that comes to her poor children with words of hope to ponder and to let seep deep into our hearts. This child that she carries under her heart will be joy for all people and will dwell with the poor with special devotion and tenderness. She who is mother to Jesus the Poor One so she is mother to all those who suffer and struggle to live. She and her child, the Holy One of God, and Joseph dwell with us all days. Rejoice and sing!

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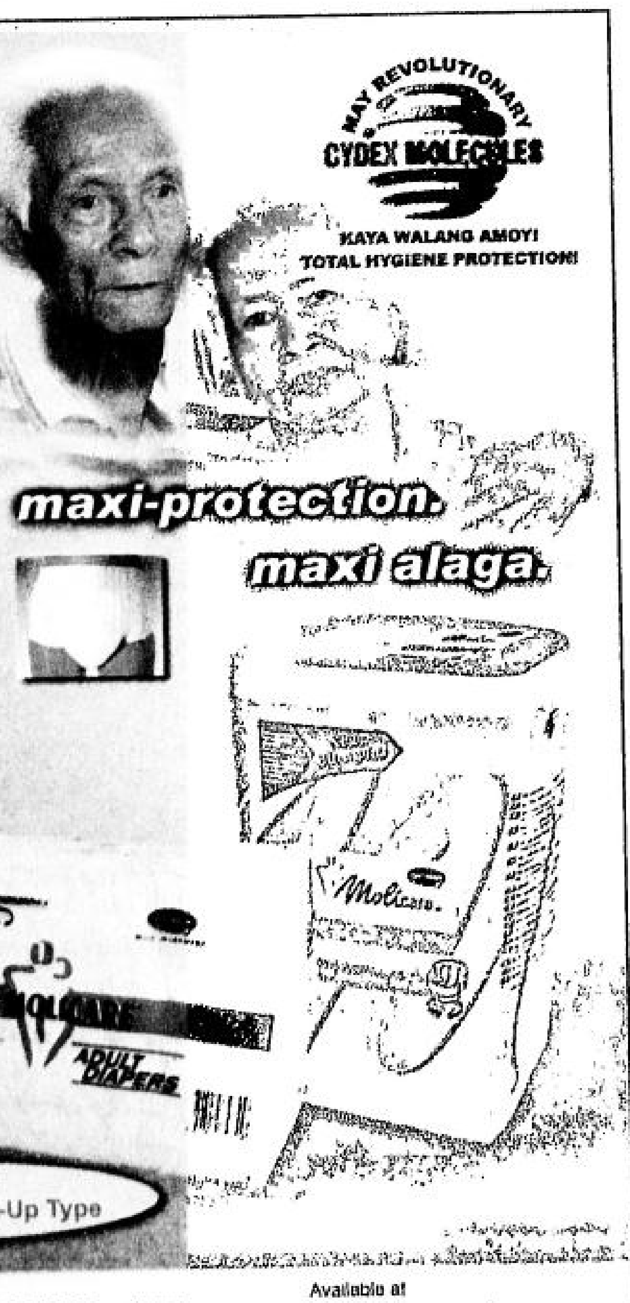

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Anong Magagawa Ko?

PUWEDE YAN. 'WAG YAN!

Social Development Week
December 12-15, 2005
Glorietta Activity Center, Makati City

Programme Of Activities

Opening Program **December 12, 5pm**
Glorietta Activity Center

Social Development Week 2005 formally opens highlighted by inspirational messages from leaders of the NGO community, formal presentation of various products offered in the Development Trade Fair, and the opening of the photo exhibit. Entertainment will be provided by guest performers.

Development Trade Fair **December 12 - 15**
Glorietta Activity Center

The tiangge-style market features products and services from various communities and partner non-government and people's organizations -- an effort to generate sustainable livelihoods through participation in the mainstream economy. Complete your Christmas shopping at the trade fair and support our local industries and get quality products at very reasonable prices!

Photo Exhibit **December 12-15**
Glorietta Activity Center

The photo exhibit highlights the achievements in social development work of CODE-NGO, its member networks, and the Peace and Equity Foundation. It also features the Philippine Poverty Map, a tool that is being used to identify multi-stakeholder partnership schemes to support a sustainable program on poverty alleviation.

A Forum for NGO and PO Leaders: The Continuing Political Crisis & Possible Alternatives - ***Ano ang Puwede?***
December 12, 1 - 4 pm
JV del Rosario Rooms 2-5
AIM Conference Center

This forum will analyze the present political crisis and the various alternatives to move out from this quandary. Resource persons and the participants will discuss the roots of the crisis, the positions and proposed alternatives of different groups and institutions, and possible actions of NGOs and POs.

PEF Development Forum -
Puwedeng-puwede 'Yan:
Good Projects that Benefit the Poor
December 13, 8 am - 12 nn
SGV Hall, AIM Conference Center

Showcase of projects that improve lives and livelihood of poor communities such as potable water supply, micro-financing, housing and health.

CODE-NGO Forum on Public Leadership, Good Governance and Civil Society –
Ano ang Puwede, Ano ang Hindi?
December 13, 1 - 5 pm
SGV Hall, AIM Conference Center

Focused on issues surrounding leadership and good governance principles and challenges, and civil society's role in promoting good public leadership and governance, the forum shall endeavor to answer the question *"Ano ang puwede? Ano ang hindi?"*

CODE-NGO Board Governance Workshop
December 14, 8 am to 5pm
E-Library, AIM Conference Center, Makati City
** by invitation only*

CODE-NGO has taken on the challenge to NGOs for stronger accountability and transparency. The workshop shall focus on the important roles and responsibilities of board members, identify and address some of the issues of the executive management in dealing with their board, and reflect on the important values, standard of behavior and future challenges for NGO board members.

9th CODE-NGO National Assembly
December 15, 8 am to 5pm
E-Library, AIM Conference Center
** by invitation only*

CODE-NGO convenes its member networks to present its accomplishments, ratify various resolutions, and present strategic plans that will shape the future of the network.

Closing Ceremonies
December 15, 5pm
Glorietta Activity Center

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

ILOILO

Iloilo celebrates SDW from December 1 to 7, 2005 in commemoration of the 6th Iloilo NGO-PO Week. With the theme *Sabat sa Kalmolon Yara man lang sa Aton!* (The Best Solution to Poverty is Within Us), the event will be highlighted by a development trade fair, conduct of free medical and legal missions, an inter-school development lecture series, an NGO-PO Congress, and a donors forum. For more information, please call Iloilo CODE-NGOs, Inc. (VISNET Region 6) at telephone numbers (033) 320-3590 or 508-6527.

CEBU

Cebu celebrates Social Development Week vis-à-vis the Sinulog Festival. The event will be highlighted by a development trade fair and photo exhibit at the Ayala Center-Cebu in January 2006. A forum will also be held where issues and solutions affecting social development may be presented and discussed. For more information, please call the Association of Foundations in Manila at telephone numbers 911-9792 or 913-7231, or ALL-R-UP in Cebu at telephone number (032) 418-2520 (look for Mae Loyola).

BICOL

Bicol celebrates the gains in social development work through a trade fair and photo exhibit in Legazpi City on the last week of January 2006 and with a Social Development Workers' Forum on the first week of February 2006. For more information, please call the Coalition for Bicol Development (CBD) at telephone number (054) 472-2569.

DAVAO

Davao celebrates Social Development Week in January 2006. Details will be announced soon. For queries, please call the Mindanao Coalition of Development NGOs (MINCODE) at telephone number (082) 299-0625.

BAGUIO

The Cordillera Region celebrates SDW in Baguio City on February 2006 with the theme *Mula sa Bigkis ng Pagkakaisa... Pagsibol ng Cordillera, Ngayon Na!* The event shall focus on promoting the well-being of the indigenous peoples through various activities such as a media blitz dubbed *Kapihan sa Benguet* and various fora on multi-sectoral partnership building, enterprise development, and the Cordillera Poverty Alleviation Model. For more information, please call the Cordillera Network of Development NGOs and POs (CORDNET) at telephone number (074) 444-7197.

Social Development Week 2005 is a project of

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CODE-NGO and PEF Spearhead Social Development Week Celebration

The Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE-NGO), with support from the Peace and Equity Foundation, Inc. (PEF), spearheads the celebration of Social Development Week (SDW) 2005 from December 12 to 15. The center of activities of the SDW event is at the Glorietta Activity Center of the Ayala Center in Makati City.

Since 1998, CODE-NGO has been hosting SDW. This event is designed to further strengthen the efforts of its member networks and partner institutions, as well as increase the awareness and participation of the general public towards a progressive Philippines. Social development work is founded on capacity-building, livelihood promotion, community organizing and empowerment among the underprivileged sectors of society.

Recognizing that the year 2005 is part of a crucial period in the country's social, political, and economic history where every Filipino's contribution is equally crucial in making a difference, this year's SDW is celebrated with the theme "Anong Magagawa Ko?: Puwede yan. 'Wag yan!" Simply, it invites everyone to revisit the basics of how each day is lived and how daily decisions and actions truly help create a better Philippines.

SDW 2005 is highlighted by the conduct of a tiangge-style development trade fair and a photo exhibit at the Glorietta Activity Center, a forum series at the AIM Conference Center, and the Annual CODE-NGO National Assembly

The SDW trade fair is an opportunity for NGOs to showcase their products and get into the mainstream economy. Participants in the trade fair come from communities that get livelihood and development assistance from PEF and other NGOs. The SDW trade fair proved to be an effective strategy for these small entrepreneurs to forge partnerships with bigger business entities, thereby providing a better chance for sustainable livelihoods for the marginalized sectors of society.

The photo exhibit, on the other hand, highlights the achievements in development work of CODE-NGO, its member networks, and its partner organization, the Peace and Equity Foundation (PEF). It features, as well, nine provincial poverty maps and the Philippine Poverty Map, which are being used to create effective programs on poverty alleviation. The Maps are shared by PEF with partners in both the private and government sectors to direct social development efforts in what were identified to be the "poorest" areas in the country today

Also part of the week-long event is the conduct of a forum series which topics are centered on the SDW theme "Puwede yan. 'Wag yan!" On December 12, the forum entitled "The Continuing Political Crisis and Possible Alternatives: Ano ang Puwede?" will be held at the JV del Rosario Rooms 2-5 of the AIM Conference Center in Makati City. This forum will analyze the present political crisis and the alternatives to move out from this quandary. Resource persons and the participants will discuss the roots and effects of the crisis, the positions and proposed alternatives of different groups and institutions, and possible actions of NGOs and POs Some of the invited speakers include Dr. Cielito Habito of the Ateneo de Manila University, Mr. Chito Gascon of the Black and White Movement and Ms. Dinky Soliman of the "Hyatt 10".

On December 13, a back-to-back forum of PEF and CODE-NGO takes place at the SGV Hall of the AIM Conference Center. In the morning, PEF holds the forum entitled "Puwedeng-puwede yan: Good Projects that Benefit the Poor" where they will showcase projects that improve lives antl promote sustainable livelihoods for poor communities. It will be followed in the afternoon by the CODE-NGO forum entitled "Public Leadership, Good Governance and Civil Society Ano ang Puwede, Ano ang Hindi?" This forum, on the other hand, intends to explore the role of civil society organizations and leaders in promoting good public leadership and governance Participants and invited guests who have joined and worked with different administrations since 1986 will share their experiences in public governance. It will also explore the lessons learned by both civil society leaders who moved and joined civil service and by POs and NGOs who have engaged these "crossover" leaders. Guest speakers include former DENR Secretary Fulgencio Factoran, Jr, former NAPC Lead Convenor and Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Ging Deles, and former TESDA Director General Edicio dela Torre. Former DAR Secretary Ernesto Garilao will have his paper read by a representative.

CODE-NGO then holds its 9th Annual Assembly on December 14-15, at the E-Library of the AIM Conference Center. An exclusive gathering of representatives from CODE-NGO's ten member networks, the event will include a board governance workshop on December 14 and the Assembly proper on December 15 where CODE-NGO presents its accomplishments, ratifies its various resolutions, and presents strategic plans that will shape the future of the network.

To cap the week-long celebration, a mini-concert will be held at the Glorietta Activity Center on December 15, starting at 5 pm, featuring Ms. Cookie Chua of Color It Red.

SDW 2005 is organized by the Association of Foundations (AF). For more information on the SDW activities, please call the AF Secretariat at telephone number (02) 913-7231 or visit them at the SDW Trade Fair Information Booth from December 12 to 15, from 10 am to 10 pm

Shop-for-a-cause: Puwede!

Who would have thought that splurging on that shopping spree could turn out to be your most socially-relevant deed this year? Yes, it could definitely be, when you shop at the Social Development Week (SDW) tiangge at the Glorietta from December 12-15!

The SDW *tiangge* is a showcase of some of the finest locally-made products that brings to the fore the world-class skill and craft of the Filipino. What makes this tiangge even more special, however, is the fact that participating suppliers and producers belong to the marginalized sector of society that receive livelihood support from PEF and other non-government organizations (NGOs). Every centavo spent at the SDW *tiangge*, therefore, translates to added income for the family of a coffee farmer in upland Benguet or to that of a linen weaver in South Cotabato, or to the abaca handicraft maker in Bicol.

And there is something for everyone at the SDW tiangge. Shoppers are treated to a wide array of products from apparel, shoes, accessories, home décor, and other indigenous handicrafts, to a selection of healthy and organic foodstuffs. Teen-agers are treated to the hippest and coolest trinkets and accessories, while moms shop for their new elegant shawls and silks. Dads may want to try the selection of organic wines. And all of these at the most affordable prices!

The SDW tiangge experience is shopping redefined - it means helping countryside livelihood projects and supporting our own gawang-Pinoy products. So, visit the SDW tiangge at the Glorietta Activity Center of the Ayala Center in Makati City, from December 12 to 15, 2005. Complete your Christmas shopping at the tiangge and do your share in supporting local development and livelihood projects for a better Philippines.

The SDW tiangge is part of the celebration of Social Development Week, an annual gathering of NGOs and POs to celebrate the sector's gains in social development work. This event is spearheaded by the country's biggest network of NGOs, the Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE-NGO), with support from the Peace and Equity Foundation (PEF).

Joker urges AFP: Probe wiretapping

From page A1

which the opposition said was evidence Ms Arroyo stole last year's election.

The latest response by a senior military official to an INQUIRER reporter's question on the scandal was: "Why don't you ask General Abu?" The official did not wish to be named. Gen. Efren Abu is a former AFP chief of staff who retired in August.

The scandal broke in June and led to an impeachment attempt against Ms Arroyo, but her allies in the House squelched the move in September.

Last week, renewed interest was focused on the case after Marietta Santos, 25, told a Senate inquiry she had seen the heart of the Isafp spying operation and had been told by her boyfriend, TSgt. Vidal Doble, that he and 13 other Isafp agents had bugged Ms Arroyo and Garcillano. Doble is reported back at work at the Isafp compound in Camp Aguinaldo.

Palace tosses issue to AFP

Armed Forces Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Generoso Senga has said the military is not investigating Doble, who allegedly sold the original wiretaps to Samuel Ong for P2 million. A former deputy director of the National Bureau of Investigation, Ong has disappeared after making the revelation.

Malacañang yesterday tossed the wiretapping issue to the AFP and the Philippine National Police, although AFP officials had said that Doble was not being investigated in connection with who was behind the bugging but simply on his claims he sold the original tapes to Ong.

"That matter is being investigated by the proper authorities, Isafp being a member of the Armed Forces," said Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

He said Ms Arroyo was not bothered by the disclosure that the Isafp was allegedly behind the wiretaps. "No," Ermita said to questions on the subject.

Ermita spoke to reporters after seeing off Ms Arroyo, who left for Kuala Lumpur to attend a summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in the Malaysian capital.

Breakdown of discipline

Senator Arroyo said that the AFP should not just boldly brush aside the demands in the upper chamber for an investigation into Isafp activities.

"Isafp wiretaps its Commander in Chief. The taped conversation is either sold, disposed of, or given to an outsider who turns it over to a third party. The third party releases it into the open and it becomes the infamous Garci tape. Because of that the President, the Commander in Chief, is asked to step down and a national crisis and scandal ensues," Arroyo said.

"Through all this, the AFP does not want to conduct an investigation into this breach of security, breach of discipline, breach of chain of command, breach of the Articles of War, in short as if nothing happened," he said.

But the maverick administration senator said what had happened struck at the very core and foundation of any army in the world.

"This attitude reflects the breakdown of discipline in the AFP. Indirectly, it tolerates low-ranking sergeants to spy on superior officers," Arroyo said.

Special committee

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, chair of the Senate committee on defense and national security which is investigating the "Hello Garci" tapes, said he would seek the reconstitution of the Senate select committee on intelligence to investigate who ordered the wiretapping and other military lapses in security.

He said his committee would concentrate on the alleged involvement of military officials in the electoral fraud.

Biazon said the select committee had not been activated since the 11th Congress and should now be reconstituted by designating its chair and members from the majority and minority blocs.

He said the select committee could deal with the questions of why the President was bugged and who ordered it and the apparent lapses in security in the Isafp. Biazon said this was brought to the open by Santos' testimony that she was free to roam what he said was the "innermost sanctotum" of all military facilities.

Biazon said that since these matters involved national security, he would propose that the hearings be conducted behind closed doors.

He said all those in position when the Isafp allegedly conducted the bugging would be summoned to the select committee hearing, including the AFP chief of staff and the Isafp head at that time.

He said Doble and 13 other members of his wiretapping team would definitely be summoned to explain the operation.

Biazon said his defense committee would then continue its inquiry into the alleged involvement of military officials in electoral fraud that was revealed in the Garcillano tapes.

Don't leave it hanging

He turned down Arroyo's suggestion that the hearing be terminated because it appeared to be going nowhere. "And what do we do, leave everything hanging?" Biazon asked.

He said his committee would continue to summon the generals mentioned in the tapes, as well as Ong and his aide, Lito Santiago, Bishop Teodoro Bacani, who helped Ong and Doble find sanctuary in the San Carlos Seminary, and Garcillano.

Biazon said he had yet to decide whether to issue another invitation or a subpoena to Garcillano, who was invited to Thursday's hearing but failed to appear at the Senate.

"He had an excuse, he was stressed out," Biazon said, referring to Garcillano's 10-hour appearance at the House on Wednesday. If Garcillano had been served a subpoena and ignored it, he would be ordered arrested and bodily brought before the Senate.

But Biazon said that for lack of time, the two investigations might not get under way until January when they return from a three-week Christmas break. Congress' sessions will only be up to Wednesday next week.

In the House, a joint inquiry into the wiretapping scandal is to resume tomorrow with the questioning of Garcillano.

Respite from political noise

Deputy House Minority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano conceded that Garcillano's evasiveness during the Dec. 7 hearing committee showed one thing: "He has been hiding a lot of things."

He said he believed that Garcillano was capable of telling the "whole truth" if only he could be freed from the custody of the administration.

"Until now he may be forced to lie because his family is under threat," said Cayetano.

Since Garcillano resurfaced Dec. 4 in Maguindanao after five months of hiding, he has been staying at the PNP's high-security Camp Bagong Diwa in Bicutan, Taguig.

Speaker Jose de Venecia and some administration lawmakers want to end the inquiry before the Christmas break to give the country a "respite from the political noise."

Representatives Douglas Cagas (NPC, Davao del Sur) and Eduardo Zialcita (Lakas, Parañaque) said De Venecia was enunciating the prevailing sentiment among Filipinos in calling for an end to the controversial inquiry.

"It's time for us to move on to other priorities," said Zialcita.

With reports from Nikko Dizon, Luige A. del Puerto and Michael Lim Ubac

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MMDA: Got a problem? Take a photo

By Tarra V. Quismundo

TIRED OF SEEING GARBAGE ON the road? Are you bothered by the sight of open manholes or vendors who block traffic by hawking their wares on sidewalks? Then take a picture and send it to the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA).

Beginning next year, residents in the metropolis who own a cellular phone equipped with a camera can shoot pictures of any situation or problem they encounter on the road and forward them to the MMDA for action.

"This is one way of communicating with our citizens. The whole idea is to involve [the public] ... As they say, a picture is worth a thousand words," said MMDA General Manager Robert Nacianceno.

The new mobile phone feedback service, to be launched in January, is an upgrade of the agency's present feedback system which allows the public to send their complaints through text messaging or by calling up 136, the MMDA hotline.

"We are now developing the system. We have already set it up, and we are testing it internally first among our directors, and how we could refer the message to the proper department upon receipt," said Nacianceno.

Once available, motorists and commuters can forward their complaints, ranging from delinquent MMDA traffic enforcers, flooded streets to mounting piles of trash, to the agency using the Multimedia Messaging Service feature of their cellular phones.

Nacianceno said the MMDA was still working on a mechanism that would inform senders of the action taken on their complaints. The mobile phone feedback service system was also undergoing more tests to ensure that computers processing the picture messages would not crash when deluged with multiple messages.

The MMDA has also talked with officials of telecom firms Globe, Smart and Sun Cellular about their possible involvement in the new feedback service system.

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Kin of slain suspect appeals to witnesses

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE FAMILY OF FRANCIS XAVIER Manzano, 26, a suspected car thief who was killed in an alleged shootout with the police last month, has called on other witnesses to come out and tell the truth.

"We are appealing to other witnesses to come forward to say what they know," lawyer Theodore Te, counsel for the Manzano family, said yesterday.

Based on reports, some witnesses have failed to show up in the ongoing investigation being conducted by the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) into the incident. Te said the Traffic Management Group agents (TMG) involved in the alleged shootout have also not been attending the hearings.

The national police earlier conducted its own probe and based on the findings, cleared the TMG agents who took part in the operation.

But Te said: "There are many contradictory statements from police authorities, not only from the respondents but also from higher officials. This should speak for itself."

To support the investigation, the family has agreed to have the remains of Manzano exhumed for reexamination by forensic expert Raquel Fortun.

The reexamination is ongoing in Baguio City, Te said.

The family, meanwhile, thanked the CHR for "spearheading the independent investigation" into Manzano's death.

"We pray that the investigation may bear fruit and that justice may be done so that Francis may be able to truly rest peacefully," his elder sister Jennifer, 37, said in a press conference last week, breaking their family's month-long silence.

She also thanked television network UNTV, which was able to film the alleged encounter, saying the footages showed "beyond any doubt that those who killed (my brother) disregarded the rules of engagement and violated his fundamental human rights."

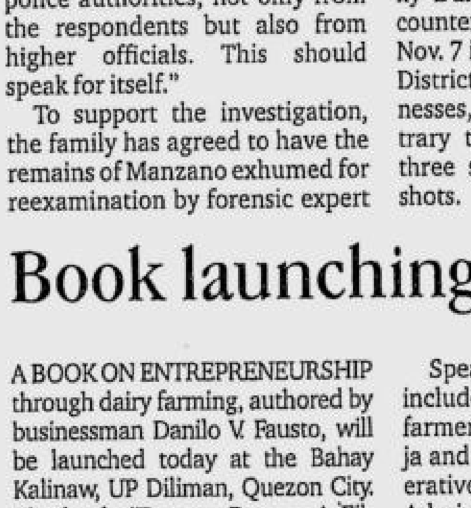
Te told the INQUIRER the family has no plans as of now to file any charges against the police, adding they would wait for the results of the CHR investigation first.

Manzano was killed with Anton Cu-Unjieng and Brian Anthony Dulay during an alleged encounter with TMG operatives on Nov. 7 inside the Ortigas Business District in Pasig City. Some witnesses, however, said that contrary to the police's claim, the three suspects did not fire any shots.

Book launching set today

A BOOK ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP through dairy farming, authored by businessman Danilo V. Fausto, will be launched today at the Bahay Kalinaw, UP Diliman, Quezon City. The book, "Dare to Dream: A Filipino Entrepreneur's Tale of Success in Dairy Farming," chronicles the author's efforts and strategies to make his dairy venture a successful one despite the odds.

Speakers during the launching include Enrico de la Cruz, a dairy farmer from Talavera, Nueva Ecija and member of the dairy cooperative founded by the author; Administrator Salvacion Bulatao of the National Dairy Authority; national scientist Libertado Cruz, executive director of the Philippine Carabao Center; and economist Sixto K. Roxas.



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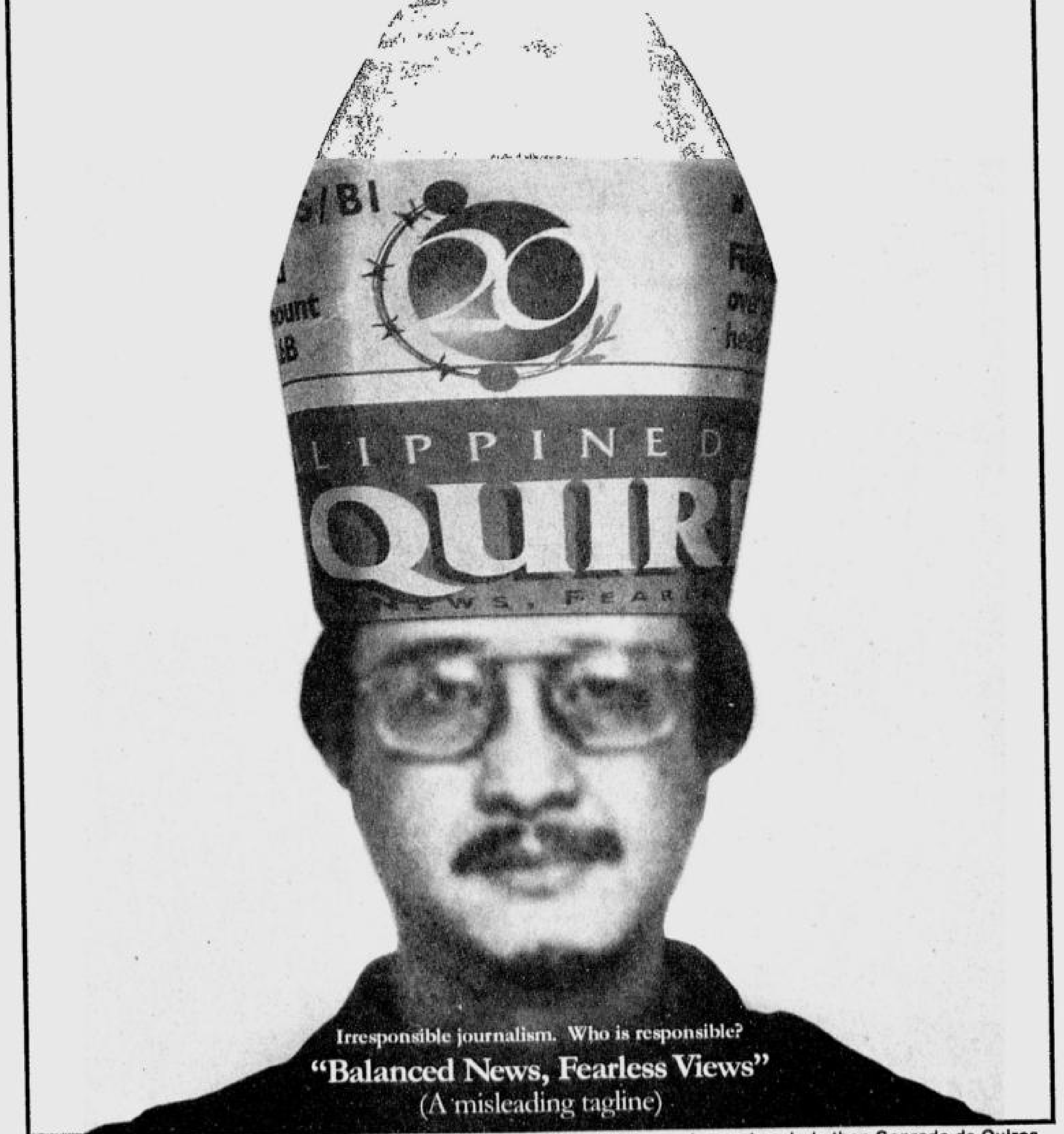
- Conrado de Quiros, columnist
The Philippine Daily Inquirer
December 5, 2005 issue



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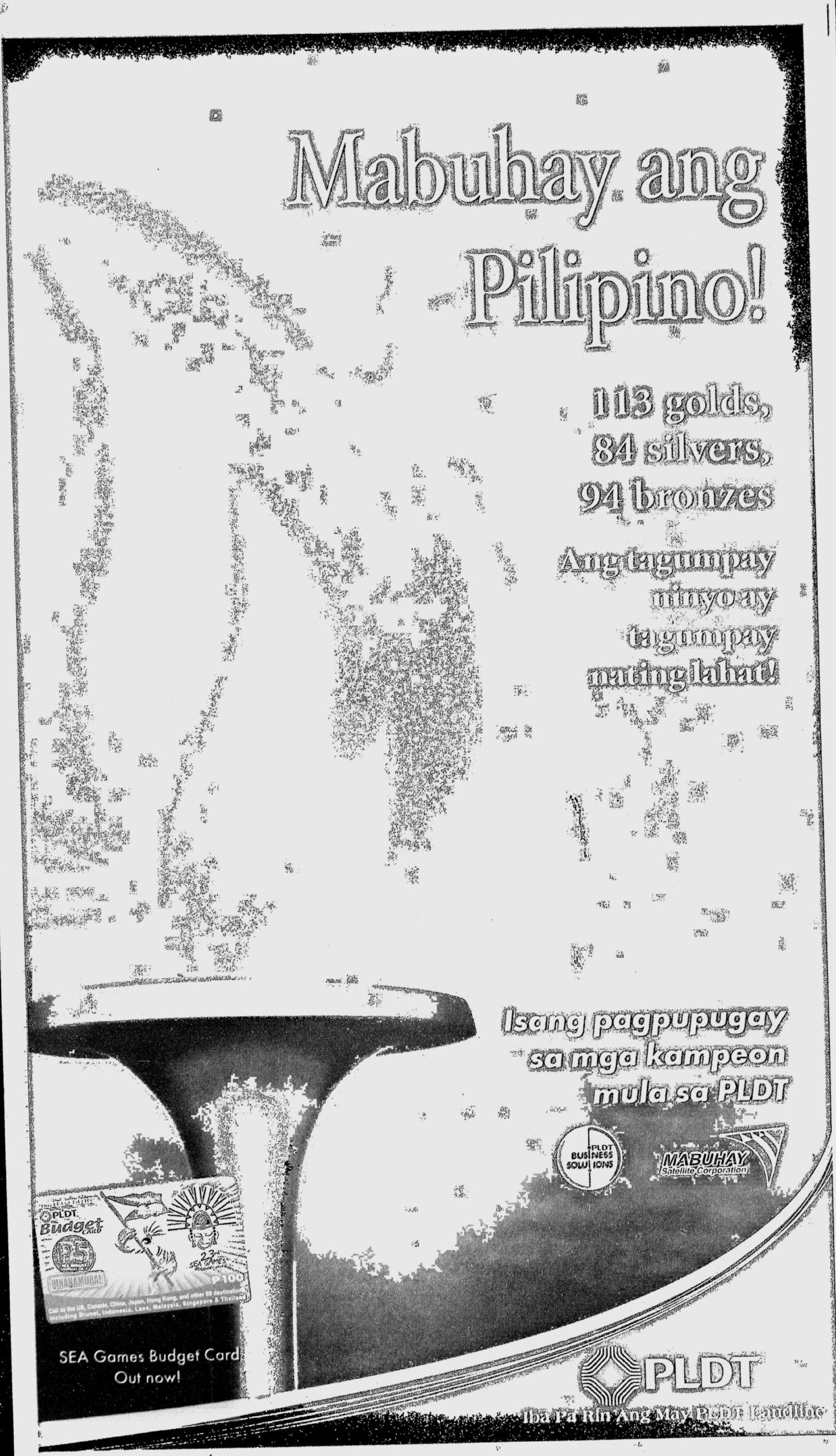

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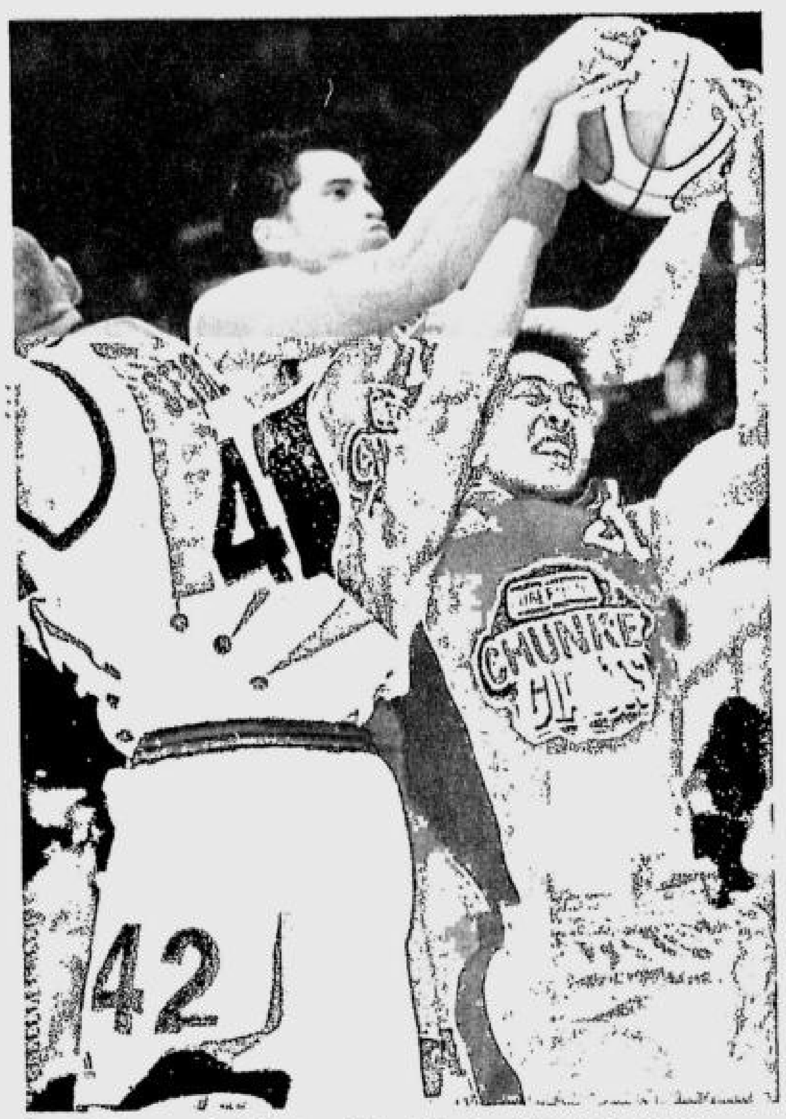

KERBY Raymundo (right) and Marc Pingris of Purefoods end up grappling for possession of the leather as San Miguel's Danny Seigle loses the rebound battle. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

GAMES WEDNESDAY (Cuneta Astrodome)
4:40 p.m.—Sta. Lucia Realty vs Purefoods
7:25 p.m.—Red Bull Barako vs Air21.

By June Navarro

ANTIPOLO CITY—AMONG ACTIVE IMPORTS, **Kwan Johnson is the worst not only in scoring and rebounding but in assists and field-goal shooting as well.**

But Johnson's shortcomings had little bearing last night as San Miguel Beer zoomed to its fourth straight win at the expense of solo leader Purefoods, 74-68, in the San Mig Coffee-PBA Fiesta Conference at the Ynares Center here.

"It doesn't matter if he's the worst," said San Miguel Beer coach Jong Uichico of his undersized import, who is three inches below the 6-foot-6 ceiling.

"He has been fitting into the system and I'm satisfied with his performance."

The loss was the second straight and fifth overall in 14 games for the Giants, whose entry into the semifinal round got stalled anew.

Johnson, who averaged 17 points, eight rebounds and two assists the past six games, accomplished his regular numbers last night after scoring 16 points on top of 12 rebounds and three assists.

Danny Seigle came out of a slump to hit 23 points after going eight of 13 from the field while Dorian Peña added 12 points and seven rebounds.

Seigle averaged only 7.3 points in the last four games, a far cry from his conference norm of at least 20 points per outing. Seigle, however, continues to struggle from the beyond the arc.

"It's tough but I'm working on it," said Seigle after going 0 of 18 from three-point range since the season began. "I'm a player who needs to take many shots before getting my rhythm. I'll just try to get my confidence back."

Though San Miguel is currently the hottest team, the Beermen remained at the bottom of the standings with a 5-8 record.

In the second game, Coca-Cola defeated Talk 'N Text, 73-67, for a 6-7 card. The Phone Pals dropped to 7-6 in a tie with Ginebra and Air21.

The scores:

First Game

SAN MIGUEL 74—Seigle 23, Johnson 16, Peña 12, Hontiveros 11, Ildefonso 6, Belasco 6, Lopez 0, Racela 0, Calagulo 0.

PUREFOODS 68—Chandler 25, Yap 10, Salvador 9, Raymundo 8, Yee 6, Yap 3, Laure 2, Billones 2, Castillo 2, Artadi 1, Pingris 0, Limpot 0.

Quarters: 16-19, 39-29, 57-52, 74-68.

Second Game

COCA-COLA 73—Thomas 24, Peek 13, Arigo 9, Singson 7, Antonio 7, Mamaril 6, Reavis 4, Morano 3, Espinosa 0.

TALK 'N TEXT 67—Taulava 13, Belano 12, Cantrell 10, Miller 10, Alapag 7, Telan 5, Cardona 4, Carey 4, Pablo 2.

Quarters: 14-18, 30-35, 53-49, 73-67.

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Juntilla shines as Montaña bombs Harbour

By Jasmine W. Payo

CAVITE CITY—REED JUNTILLA PROVED TOO hard to stop in the final period as he powered Montaña Pawnshop past the skidding Harbour Centre, 69-63, in the PBL Heroes Cup yesterday at the San Sebastian Gym in Cavite.

Juntilla shot 11 of his 19 points in the fourth quarter, while returning forward Al Magpayo added 11 markers.

"He played exceptionally well," said coach Robert Sison of his veteran guard from Cebu. "I give credit to the boys because you don't know who will step up. Our backcourt rotation of (Froilan) Baguion and (Al) Vergara helped us. And now that Magpayo is back, that was also a big difference. That boosted our morale."

In the second game, Rain or Shine blew a double-digit cushion but still held on in the dying seconds for a 61-58 squeaker over Toyota Otis.

The Elasto Painters turned to big men Jay-R Reyes and Marvin Ortiguerra, who teamed up for 29 points.

Montaña and Rain or Shine joined Granny Goose and Hapee-PCU in the second spot at 4-3, trailing Magnolia Ice Cream's pacesetting 6-1 record.

Harbour Centre continued its downward spiral, absorbing its fifth straight loss despite tapping new mentor Jorge Gallent and reactivating the services of point guard LA Tenorio.

Toyota Otis joined Harbour Centre and Far Eastern Insurance at the cellars with 2-5 cards.

Dindo Pumaren resigned as coach two weeks ago to concentrate on the University of the East's title campaign in the next UAAP season.

Juntilla sizzled offensively in the final canto, scoring eight points in the Jewels' 10-3 run for a 62-48 lead after a close 52-45 contest.

A Juntilla jumper followed by an Ariel Capus basket gave the Jewels their biggest advantage, 66-50, with less than five minutes remaining.

Led by Joseph Yeo and Tenorio, the Portmasters tried to recover with an 8-0 charge in the closing minutes but could only pull within seven, 67-60.

The scores:

First Game

MONTAÑA 69—Juntilla 19, Magpayo 11, Compton 10, Baguion 6, Vergara 6, Bono 6, Capus 5, Dela Cuesta 5, Guerrero 1, Mercado 0, Castro 0.

HARBOUR CENTRE 63—Yeo 16, Gaco 11, Reyes 10, Tenorio 6, Luanzon 5, Arellano 2, Vicente 1.

Quarters: 13-20, 35-29, 49-43, 69-63

Second Game

RAIN OR SHINE 61—Reyes 15, Ortiguerra 14, Malabanan 13, Tangkay 7, Enrile 6, Aljamal 4, Sagad 2, Tan 0, Cabatu 0, Sta. Maria 0.

TOYOTA OTIS 58—Devance 14, Aldave 10, Bautista 8, Aban 8, Andaya 6, Oreta 5, Alcaraz 3, Rodriguez 2, Capati 2, Daa 0, Larong 0, Anabo 0, Tagupa 0.

Quarters: 18-11, 29-20, 49-35, 61-58

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2 p.m.—Far Eastern vs Harbour Centre
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Manalo bags $100,000 in Texas

FILIPINO POOL MASTER MARLON "Marvelous" Manalo secured his biggest ever paycheck of $100,000 (approximately P5.4 million) after winning the inaugural edition of the Texas Hold 'Em Billiards Invitational championship yesterday in Texas.

The 28-year-old Manalo, an AB economics graduate of Jose Rizal University, dominated the eight man-field led by former world champion Johnny "The Scorpion" Archer of the US.

Also in the exclusive roster were Americans Gabe Owen, Charlie "The Dragon" Williams, Rodney "Rockets" Morris, Corey Deuel and Robb Saez and Luc Salvas of Canada.

According to the report from AZ Billiards.com, the eight players were split into two groups of four with the top two players after the eliminations advancing to the semifinals.

Owen and Archer advanced from Group 1 while Manalo and Morris qualified from Group 2. The first player eliminated from the final four was Owen followed by Morris.

By the time Morris was eliminated, Manalo held a huge lead with $970,000 in chips compared to Archer's $30,000.

Archer made a run and won three straight games to get back to $240,000 in chips, but still trailed Manalo. He was eliminated when the Filipino won the next game.

For topping the winner-take-all event, Manalo won $100,000.

Aristeo "Putch" Puyat, RP billiards patron, congratulated Manalo for his victory and said the Mandaluyong ace is a future prospect to take over from Efren (Bata) Reyes and Francisco (Django) Bustamante along with Alex Pagulayan, the 2004 world pool champion.

Manalo's win came after Reyes' triumph in the IPT's King of the Hill Invitational 8-Ball Shootout in Orlando, Florida. *Marlon Bernardino, contributor*

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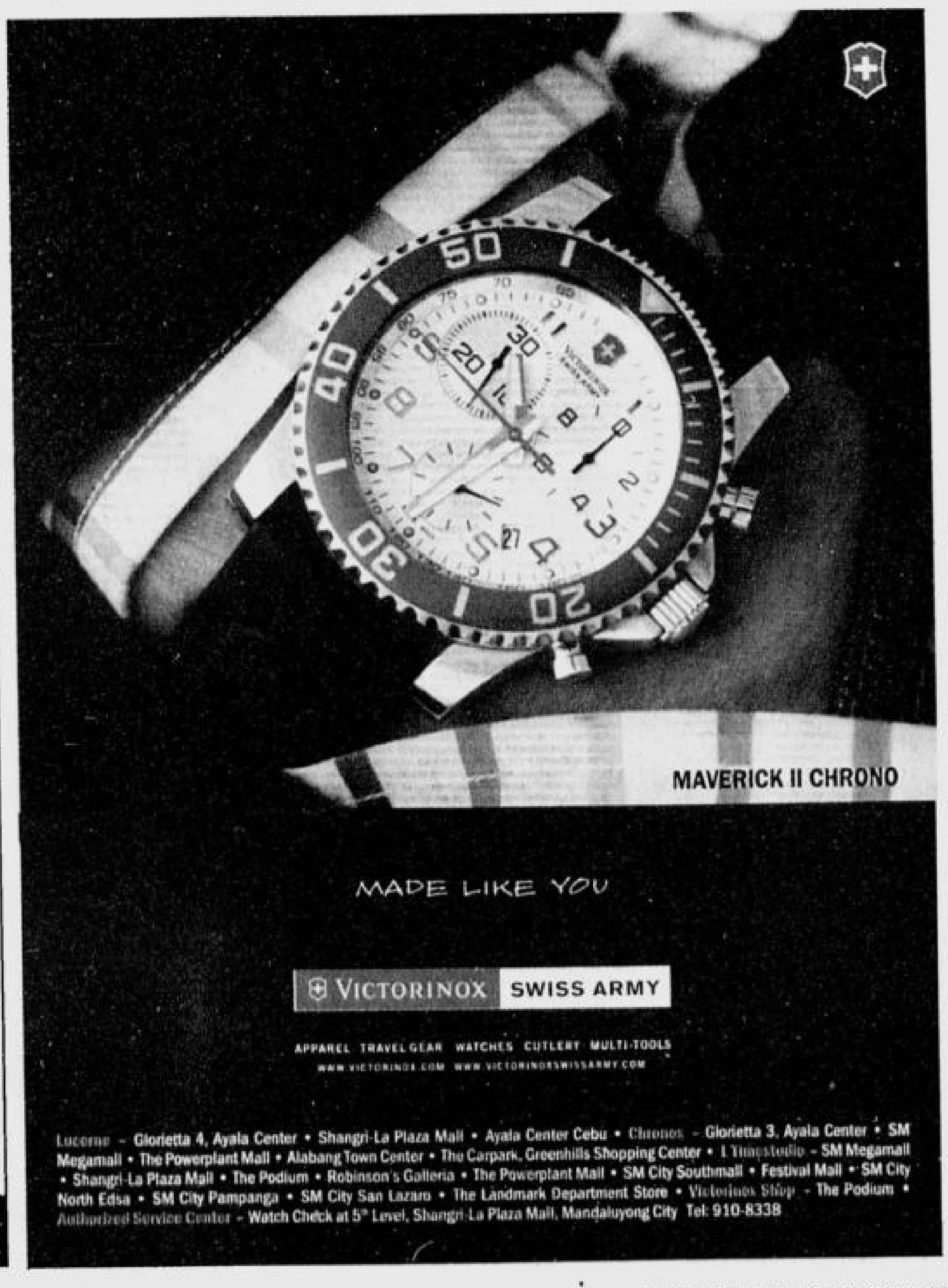
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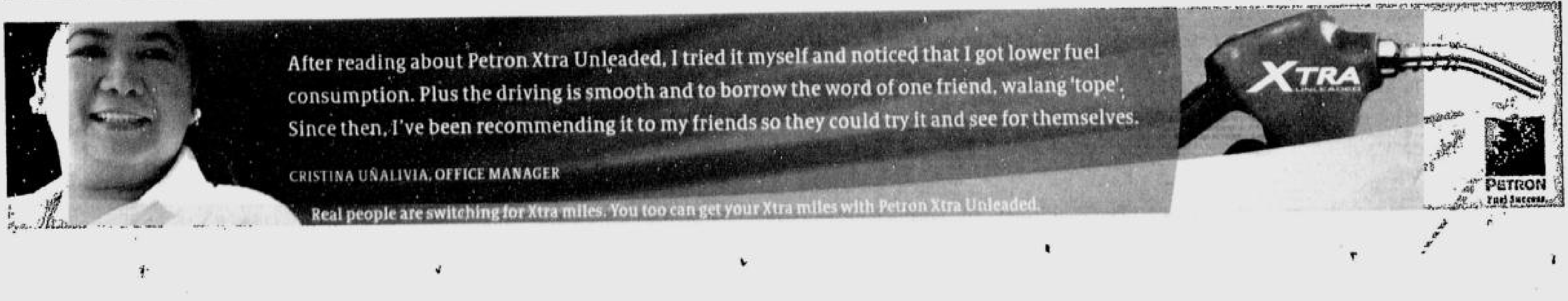
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Miñoza winds up 5th after solid 68

MIÑOZA: Another top ten finish PDI PHOTO

BANGKOK—FRANKIE MIÑOZA SHOWED why he remains the top Filipino golf star Sunday, firing a solid 4-under-par 68 to salvage fifth place in the $600,000 Volvo Masters of Asia won by India's Shiv Kapur by two strokes.

With his four-birdie, no-bogey card in the final round at the Thai Country Club, Miñoza wound up with an 11-under-par 277 total to clinch his second top 10 finish after clinching second place in the Vietnam Carlsberg Masters last month.

Had it not been for his second-round 74, Miñoza would have challenged for the title in the Asian Tour's final tournament. He started with a 70 then bounced back with a 65 in the third round.

Miñoza went into the tournament ranked 30th in the money list with $99,468 despite playing only in 11 events.

Angelo Que, who won the Vietnam leg last year, finished in a four-way tie for 44th place at 295 after a 76.

The 23-year-old Kapur fired a superb 67 and claimed his maiden Asian Tour title with a tournament record 20-under-par 268.

Thailand's Thaworn Wiratchant was also celebrating after clinching his first Asian Tour Order of Merit crown following a spectacular season which saw him claim four titles and earn $510,122, both a record in Asian golf history.

Lexus Cup

Meanwhile, in Singapore, Erica Blasberg matched her game-saving shot from the day before to clinch the winning point Sunday as the Internationals downed Asia 16-8 at the women's Lexus Cup.

Goma shoots down sporting clays title

DENIED OF A MEDAL IN THE Southeast Asian Games shooting competitions recently, actor Richard Gomez vented his ire in the 2005 national sporting clays championship to bag the championship recently in Taytay, Rizal.

Gomez shot 129 points out of 150 targets to nip Raul Arambulo, who scored a 127.

Gomez also put one over SEA Games gold medalists Darius Hizon and Nonoy Bernardo and 2005 Compak Sporting national champion June Vergara.

Vergara won the Class A competition over Hizon and Joey Valdes (119).

For details, e-mail scap@pldtsl.net or teamgomasport@yahoo.com or call 0920-8209849, 0918-8747142 or 723-8896.

Other winners in the tourney sponsored by Bench, Yamaha Motorcycles, Aquila Firearms and Ammunitions, Duty Free Phils., Rustance's Essense's ipods from Mobil 1, Pampanga's Best, Laporte, Throwing Machines, Rio Ammunitions, C2 Ice Tea, Alfonso Chua and Andrew Poblete were:

Class B—Sam Santos, 105 targets; Class C—Voltaire Balagtas 77; 20 gauge—Raul Arambulo, 151; Senior class—Nonoy Bernardo, 138; veterans class—Tony Gana, 102; Ladies—Irene Garcia, 95.

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Eagle Ridge tilt: Elepanio, Comia rule

MANUEL COMIA AND JOHN ELEPANIO CAME through with a mighty finish to clinch the overall title in the FourXFore Invitational, the member-guest tournament of the giant Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club in Gen. Trias, Cavite recently.

Comia and his guest partner Elepanio combined for a 36-hole aggregate of 268 on a team handicap of 31, using a big round at the tough Faldo course to prevail by three net strokes over the partnership of Judge Manuel Mayo and Buddy Gob.

The leaders after the first half of the competitions, Mayo and Gob wound up with a 271 total which was good for a 10-shot win in the Silver Division.

The Gold Division plum went to Efren Cruz and Bayani Fontanilla, Serge and Jovencio Fojacs claimed the Bronze Division award while Marthy del Rosario and Beth Menchavez took the Ladies crown in the tourney sponsored by CIGI, Aqua Dyne Drilling, PacSports, Microtel Inn & Suites, RS Night Hawk, House of Hana, SG Enterprises, WG Construction and GG&A Club-Shares.

Cruz-Fontanilla's 280 total was six shots up on the Alex Honrado-Robert Reyes duo, Mayo and Gob beat Nicolae Sevilla-Joel Jose by 10, the Fojas team nipped Winston Sena-Dindo Minoria by one while del Rosario-Menchavez was one up on Arlette Dizon-Gilda Medestomas.

Winning the low gross award was the all-Korean tandem of Jun Kim Byung and Oh Dong Wok with their 314 aggregate.

Tickets for two to any destination in Europe via Lufthansa and to Hong Kong via Philippine Airlines were raffled off after the prizes were not won on the course as hole-in-one prizes.

The other hole-in-one prizes were P50,000 cash from CIGI and golf sets from Titleist donated by Dynamic Sports and Leisure Corp. and Callaway through Planet Sports.

SPORTSWATCH

Mighty Filter makes finals

IT WILL be Mighty Filter Kings vs Hobe Bihon in the finals of the 2005 PICAA Filipino-Chinese basketball tournament at the Philippine Buddhacare gym in Quezon City. Mighty Filter trounced Nougat Candy, 75-43, to set up a much-awaited winner-take-all title showdown with early finalist Hobe Bihon tomorrow. Eldrick Ferrer led Mighty Filter with 19 points.

USC defeats SSA-Pampanga

SILAY CITY—University of San Carlos-Cebu (USC) survived Pampanga's St. Scholastica's Academy (SSA) late surge to open defense of its Small Basketeers Philippines title with a 40-38 victory in the 2005 BEST Center nationals at the Natalio G. Velez Gymnasium Saturday. SSA, Luzon champions of the tournament sponsored by Milo, trailed 27-36, but Joseph Ivan Dungca rallied the Pampanga-based school. But time simply wasn't on the side of SSA.

Roligon finals today

THE CHAMPIONSHIP round of Roligon Mega cockpit's "Incredibol Na, Apordabol Pa 5-cock derby" starts at 10 a.m. today with more than 200 fights slated. Jeric Junio, champion of last year's Roligon Anniversary Derby, leads the qualifiers of this derby sponsored by Lakpue Drug Inc. and Thunderbird Enertone after his three entries tallied two points each. For inquiries, call 851-2275, 833-1638 and 852-9812.

Makati derby under way

EYE-POPPING prizes await participants in today's "Pamaskong Salpukan 6-Cock Derby" at the Makati Coliseum. Aside from the P3 million guaranteed prize, the champion will also drive home a brand new Toyota Innova. The seven-day event is a presentation of WTJ Sports and Amusement Corporation. For details, call 896-3545 and 895-6475.

NCA series blasts off

THE NATIONAL Cockers Association (NCA), the country's premiere and most prestigious organization of cockers, will present today its opener for the 2005-2006 cock season, a 7-cock derby at the San Juan Coliseum. Sponsor is Sagupaan Complexor 3000. The NCA will also stage the prestigious NCA International Derby on Jan. 16, 18 and 20. Also slated on Dec. 13, 15 and 17 is the Daytime 4-Cock Derby, with P1 million and an owner-type jeep awaiting the winners. For details, call 0918-2620338.

Don't do it, Mr. Cojuangco

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

(My esteemed friend Elmer Yanga sent this text message: "The most painful thing about being a good sport is you have to lose to prove it. Nothing displays character more than how you handle winning and losing.)

HAVING WON THE OVERALL TITLE OF the just-ended 23rd SEA Games by the proverbial mile, the resurrected Filipino athletes are now talking Olympics. Even President Macapagal-Arroyo is talking about it.

"We can now say, Beijing, here we come," the Chief Executive said during the victory party she hosted recently for the 800-plus members of the champion team. "The Philippines is now ready to take a crack at its first-ever gold medal in the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games."

Looking back at the Philippines' astonishing success in the 23rd SEA Games (where it won 113 gold, 86 silver and 91 bronze medals), I say that the biggest wining factors were, first and foremost, the athletes who trained so hard and traveled too far to prepare for the Games and the moral support provided by their countrymen who rallied behind them during the competitions.

Also playing a big supporting role were Philsoc chair and POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, PSC chair William "Butch" Ramirez, First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, POC chair Robert Aventajado, Rep. Monico Puentevella, POC secretary general Steve Hontiveros, special assistant to the POC president Go Teng Kok, former tennis head Col. Buddy Andrada, marketing wizard Secretary Roberto "Obet" Pagdanganan, the volunteer workers and, last but not the least, members of the PNP who secured the Games.

"*Walang* star," said Cojuangco during a postmortem interview on television. "We did have problems, but the whole team worked extremely well."

However, I am bothered by his statement that he would be pursuing his dream of building a national training center for every sport at Clark Field, the former American military base in Angeles, Pampanga.

I beg to disagree. Clark Field is not the ideal venue to build a new sports complex and training center. The reported presence of toxic waste at Clark could be very harmful to the physical and mental health of the athletes who will be training there. If memory serves, Cojuangco had even expressed concern with the toxic waste issue at Clark, but how come he is singing a different tune now?

Instead of Clark, there are other environment-friendly places like the cities of Tagaytay, Antipolo, Baguio and Muntinlupa or farther down south Cebu and Bacolod, which also successfully hosted some events of the 23rd SEA Games.

In the case of Muntinlupa, Mayor Jaime Fresnedi said he would not only hand out cash rewards to its homegrown athletes who won medals in the last SEAG, but would also spur the sports development program of the city by building a multimillion peso sports complex three to four months from now in Barangay Tunasan.

A few years ago, reader Mario Austria had suggested Muntinlupa as an ideal venue to build a new sports complex and training center. He said that Muntinlupa, unlike the aging Rizal Memorial Sports Complex in Manila, has never been flooded because it is some 300 meters above sea level. "Muntinlupa is a wide expanse of low rolling hills ventilated by breeze from Laguna Bay," Austria said.

Fr. Paul de Vera of St. Benedict College in Alabang also said the proposal to transfer the ancient RMSC to Muntinlupa is most welcome.

"We need first-class facilities to have world-class athletes. We need a new sports complex. Who knows? One day a fairy godfather might just pick up the bill to build this new sports complex."

But Clark Field should be ruled out. Environmentalists like Myrla Baldonado, Von Hernandez and lawyer Eric Mallonga had said that the toxic chemicals in the water the people drink and the air they breathe inside the former US base could be harmful to their health, including the athletes who would be housed while training there.

Even Princess Caroline of Hanover of Amade (World Association of Children's Friends) had shown deep concern over the toxic waste issue. "Toxic waste contamination is a problem that needs to be squarely addressed and remedied because many of its victims are those children without the capacity or ability to defend against its devastating effects," she said.

Two victims of toxic waste were Crizel Jane Valencia and Jaster Bernal, who died of leukemia at a very young age of 6. They found that the water they had been drinking and bathing was highly contaminated with heavy metals and other toxic substances.

According to Baldonado, more than 300 people have died of leukemia and suffered mental retardation resulting from drinking contaminated water at the former American bases in both Clark Field and Subic Bay.

ARENAS: Nine turnovers AP

Hawks spread wings

Deny Spurs best start with huge upset

ATLANTA—THE NBA'S LONGEST LOSING streak and second-longest winning streak came to unlikely ends Saturday when the Atlanta Hawks beat San Antonio, 94-84, to deny the Spurs their best 20-game start in franchise history.

The Hawks snapped their seven-game losing streak, winning for only the third time this season and the first time since Nov. 25.

The Spurs saw their six-game winning streak end.

The defending NBA champion Spurs (16-4) were denied their first 17-3 start. They also were 16-4 after 20 games last season.

Joe Johnson led the Hawks with 22 points, and Zaza Pachulia added 19 points and 14 rebounds. Tony Parker led San Antonio with 20 points.

In other games, Chicago defeated Washington, 118-111; Orlando clubbed Denver, 94-83; Toronto chilled Charlotte, 111-103; Philadelphia whipped New Jersey, 107-95; Indiana routed Memphis, 80-66; Minnesota ambushed the LA Lakers, 95-82; Milwaukee thwarted Cleveland, 111-106; Dallas subdued Boston, 103-94; Sacramento surprised Seattle, 123-104; and the LA Clippers upset Phoenix, 101-91

In Washington, Chris Duhon scored all of his 24 points in the second half, Kirk Hinrich had 22 points, 13 assists and seven rebounds as Chicago rallied from a 14-point fourth-quarter deficit to beat Washington.

The Bulls ended the game with a 16-0 run after trailing by nine with 3 minutes to play, ending an 11-game slide at the MCI Center. *AP*

John Hay cops Fil A title

BAGUIO CITY—FRED PUCKETT shot a 3-under-par 66 for 39 points to power host John Hay to the Fil A crown of the 56th Fil-Am Invitational here Saturday.

Bill Lawrence had 31 points, Mars Garcia added 29 and Bong Mandapat a 27 as John Hay amassed 126 for a 445 total.

Clyde Cabreros, who scored a hole-in-one in the second round at Baguio Country Club, did not count for John Hay with his 22.

Forest Hills sputtered on the final day with a 123 tally for 440. Larry Patnagnon scored 35 to pace the team with Ronnie Littaua and Peter Young both accounting for 32s. Tony Olivez' 24 was the final card that counted.

Eastridge tallied 94 for 375 for the Am A crown as Bodjie Yazuma scored 27, Sang Ho-Park and Jess Ronsario 23s and Tito Eusebio 21.

The other winners were: Yokosan Golf (Fil B), Guam Kool Swingers (Am B), Crystal Dew Jungolf (Fil C). *Musong R. Castillo*

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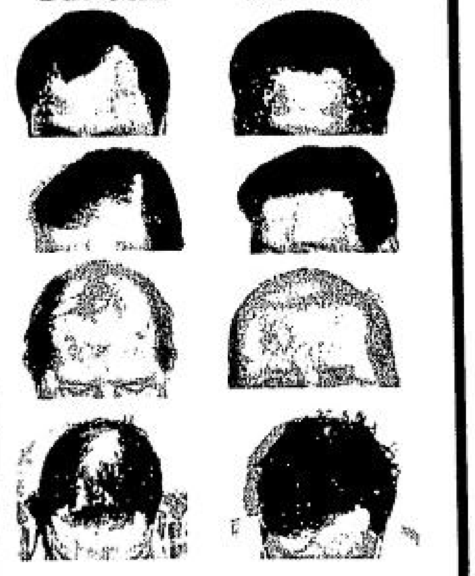
BEFORE AFTER



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Peñalosa outclasses Paraguay's Azuaga

PEÑALOSA

GERRY PEÑALOSA OUTCLASSED Paraguay's Dario Azuaga in their 10-round bantamweight duel topbilling the "Rage in December" card at the Ynares Center in Antipolo City Saturday night.

Judges Salvador Lopez, Ricardo Canlas and Capt. Ramon Flores all scored the bout 100-88 in favor of Peñalosa, who barely showed signs of his one-year inactivity.

The southpaw former World Boxing Council champion had Azuaga on the verge of a knockdown in the sixth and eventually felled him in the eighth and ninth rounds although the Paraguayan managed to finish the bout on his feet.

The win improved Peñalosa's record to 49 wins (33 KOs) against five losses and two draws.

Peñalosa sent Azuaga down in the eighth round with crisp combinations, before following it up with another knockdown in the ninth courtesy of a picture-perfect uppercut.

However, the foreigner managed to beat referee Vir Abainza's count after the two knockdowns and managed to escape an imminent knockout by backpedalling whenever the Filipino went for the kill.

OPBF bantam king Malcolm Tuñacao, Gerry's friend who was at ringside, said Azuaga kept on running after getting a taste of Peñalosa's punching power. *Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor*

RP 4X4 team finishes fifth

TEAM PHILIPPINES, COMPOSED OF LARRY Mendiola and Atoy Jamila III, survived the world's toughest adventure competition, placing fifth overall in the Rainforest Challenge of Malaysia (RFC).

Showing solid teamwork, sheer determination and mental toughness, the Filipinos totalled 980 points in a field of 250 participants representing 25 countries around the world.

The Filipino 4x4 adventure team also captured the the Team Spirit award aside from taking second runner-up honors in the over 3,000 class.

"Team Philippines' performance only proved that Filipino offroaders can excel in international competition," said Robby Consunji, head of Team Philippines and also the president of Maven Management, Inc., the official Philippine representative to RFC Malaysia.

Host Malaysia paraded three teams boasting sophisticated vehicle set-ups: Johor (1,259 total points), Kuala Lumpur (1206) and Perak (1,004) took the overall, first and second runner-up honors, respectively.

Team Philippines was supported by Columbia Sportswear, Land Cruiser Club of the Philippines (Pampanga Chapter), Hotwire, Petron, Rudy Project, Sunbolt, Land Rover, Old Man Emu, Blue Dot Outdoor Inc., Bilstein, ARB.

"We thanked God that we finished without any incident," said the 41-year old Mendiola.

Speed Advantage claims Gold Cup

SPEED ADVANTAGE WON A THREE-HORSE battle royale, getting back at Real Spicy and Empire King to bag the 33rd Presidential Gold Cup yesterday at the San Lazaro Leisure Park.

Guided by Fernando Raquel Jr., Speed Advantage peeled away from his pursuers in the final stretch to score a two-length victory.

Left biting the dust were Real Spicy, the top pick at the windows who finished second, and last year's winner Empire King, who was another length behind in third.

"We got back at them at last," said Raquel, noting that the 3-year-old colt was only fourth among betting favorites. "And it was sweet because it happened in the Gold Cup. I rode the best horse today."

The son of Royal Premier out of Trudy Capote came into the classic race still smarting from previous losses to Real Spicy and Empire King.

He got a sound beating from Real Spicy in the Chairman's Cup, and lost by the narrowest of margins to Empire King in the Sta. Lucia Cup.

But yesterday, the galloper owned by the Yutadco Stable and bred by former Rep. Noel "Toti" Cariño got all the advantage and showed up with the bigger kick in the 2,000-meter contest to capture the P1.5 million first prize.

RAQUEL JR.

Raquel masterfully drove Speed Advantage within range of early leaders Cat's Gold, Don Paolo and Last Hazm and began to dig in furiously at mid-backstretch, saving precious ground in the process.

Speed Advantage roared ahead nearing the home turn as Real Spicy started to put in his claim after running most of the race on the outside while Empire King also tried to be in the picture along with Euro Bucks.

As they straightened out for home, there was no denying Speed Advantage as he kicked away easily, his rivals' challenge nowhere in sight amid the thunderous roar of the jampacked Sunday crowd.

Real Spicy, the pride of Hermie Esguerra, settled for P500,000, while the dethroned Empire King got P250,000. Cover Girl, never in the hunt, landed fourth for P125,000.

Cool Runnings was fifth then came Euro Bucks, Real Spicy's stablemate whose seven-race winning streak was snapped. Cat's Gold arrived seventh followed by 2003 champion Red Star Rising, who ran his final race; Don Paolo and Last Hazm.

"Yes, this will be his last race," confirmed former racing commissioner Francis Trillana Jr., referring to Red Star Rising.

Speed Advantage, also the winner of this year's Cojuangco Cup and PGMA Cup, timed a fast 2:05 flat (23.5-23.5-26.5-25.26).

Pacquiao has a lot to do

By Hermie Rivera

COMMENTARY

THE LAST TIME I FILLED A NEWS space, I told everyone how good Manny Pacquiao was despite his loss to Erik Morales.

Then quick as a jungle cat, the GenSan marvel went on to kayo journeyman Hector Velasquez after his bitter loss to the man they call El Terrible, who he faces in a rematch on Jan. 21 in Las Vegas.

The persistent query I get is whether the South Cotabato sensation has what it takes to beat the smart-punching Tijuana native.

In that meeting at Vegas' MGM Grand, these macho super-featherweights served a delectable slugfest that enthralled fans—thus compelling promoters to bring them back for an obligatory encore.

Rid of his financial woes inflicted by his ex-bosses, Pacquiao could win his grudge match with his erstwhile tormentor provided his training isn't marred by distractions—much like his training weeks leading to his showdown with Morales.

But Pacquiao has a lot to do yet.

Which means that only after three weeks of rigorous training will one get an indication as to how serious the two rivals are in their rubber bout.

Both are way off in their respective preparations at this stage.

You can bet though they'll tear at each other's throat once they square off for all the marbles—*'ika nga*—disdaining what purists call a probing round.

Indeed! No such thing as sizing up the opposition in the early going.

It is going to be a war with no favors sought save for the retention of the allowed rest period between rounds.

From the get-go, Pacquiao will launch an early raid on Morales' defensive arsenal—no surprise at all since that's his trademark. But the Mexican will be around for sure—obliging Pacman with his blockbusting counterfoils.

That scenario happened in their first well-received confrontation.

I'm not looking at a drastic change on how they'll go about re-arranging each other's physical attributes even with the added raise in their paychecks not to mention the hefty share both will be earning from their pay-per-view deals.

Neither will there be a slack on the savage pace both will employ once the opening gong sounds at the Connie and Mack Center.

Absolute ring mayhem will explode—with the winner and loser emerging overnight millionaires if not badly cut ring tycoons.

Remember the bloody slit Pacman suffered in the 5th round caused by a headbutt their first time out?

Keep in mind too that the stakes are stupendously high for this rematch with both parties bankrolling unheard of lucre.

Enough to fund a coup?

Ed's Note: Recah Trinidad skips writing to give way to this commentary. His Bare Eye column will resume on Wednesday

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ABC 5			Winner TV Shopping		Speed		TNA Impact		Sentro	Friends	Guinness Book Of Record		Fear Factor		Big News	The Apprentice		Toloo TV	
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Little Amy	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Amazing Twins	Meteor Garden Season 2	TV Patrol World	Mga Anghel Na Walang Langit	Kampanerang Kuba	Panday	Vietnam Rose	Pinoy Big Brother	OK Fine! Whatever			Insider
AXN		SWAT Police			Maximum Exposure (Season II)		E Buzz	Amazon		The Outer Limits (Season IV)		The 4400		Numb3rs (Season I)		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 4)		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 4)	
Cartoon Network	Johnny Bravo	Dexter's Laboratory	Powerpuff Girls	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Codename: Kids Next Door		The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy		Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers	Battle B-Daman	Machine Robo-Rescue	X-Men Evolution	Samurai Jack	Justice League	Static Shock	Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers
Cinema One		Anak Ng Bulkan		Ganito Kami Noon, Paano Kayo Ngayon?				Forever My Love				Maging Akin Ka Lamang				Red Diaries			
Cinemax				The Naked Jungle			Undercover Lover (5:45 PM)			Philadelphia	Deep Evil			Dave				Boiling Point (10:50PM)	
CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	Living Golf	World News Asia		Your World Today	
Discovery Channel		Body Works		Ancient Clues		Mythbusters 3Li Jiang, One City, Two Tales		Unsolved History				Wild Discovery		Disaster At The Death Coast		The History Of Singapore			
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Un-talkative Bunny	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Lilo & Stitch	Sabrina, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			So Little Time		Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Ranger	Wonderful World Of Disney	
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ETC		Complete Savages	Knock First	Today Weekend		Eliminidate	Change of Heart	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	Friends	Will & Grace	The O.C.		Queer Eye For The Straight Guy		ET Weekend		For Love Or Money	
EWTN	Benediction And Devotion Encore	Angelus (3:15 PM)	Bible Treasure Chest	Image Of God	St. Thomas More Faithful Statesman	Rosary With Mother Angelica	Voices On Virtue	EWTN Gallery	The Catholic Faith & Vatican II	Sunday Night With (Encore) Fr. Benedict Groeschel		Threshold Of Hope		Daily Mass (SAP) Live		Angelus (10:15PM)	Defending Life	Catholic Compass	
Fox News		Fox Report Sunday		Beltway Boys	Fox News Watch	Bulls & Bears	Cavuto On Business	Forbes On Fox	Cashin' In	Fox & Friends				Fox News Live					
GMA 7	Kung Mamahalin Mo Lang Ako	Now and Forever	Date With Tiffany		Dragonball Z	Slam Dunk	Frog Prince	24 Oras		Extra Challenge	Sugo	Encantadia	Starstruck 3	Jewel In The Palace/Lagot Ka, Isusumbong Kita			Saksi		
Hallmark Channel	Bewitched IV	Wife Swap III		HCA: The Fairytaler	Sesame Street		Who's The Boss	Bewitched IV	The Nanny III	Family Law II		Wife Swap III		Arthur Hailey's Detective			Mcleod's Daughters IV		Family Law II (11:25PM)
HBO			How To Deal			S.W.A.T. (5:15 PM)				Tango & Cash (7:15 PM)				Frankenfish			As Good As It Gets		
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Krusada Kontra Krimen		Global Family Series		Japan Video Topics		Basketball Show		King Of Adventure	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV		South Park	Street Smarts	Wwe Heat		WWE Velocity		Cheat	Just For Laughs (Gags)	Mad TV		Sweet Spot	Comedy Central Presents	Comedy Central Presents	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Blue Collar TV	Banzai	Joe Schmo Show	
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Molto Mario	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Food 911	101 Most Awesome Moments		NY Fashion Week	Life & Style		Living Space	Style Star	Breathing Room	Genuine Article
MTV Philippines	Rockola	MTV Ask	Chart Attack		Viva La Bam	Pop Inc		MTV Hits				Massive	Get Spotted	TRL		The 70's House	Wild N' Out	Homecoming	VH1 Video Collections
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	OPM MYX	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	MYXLOG	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten			Mobile MYX Top Picks	Urban MYX	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX
National Geographic		Dangerous Encounters		Bug Attack		Snake Wranglers	Totally Wild	Top 5		Wow!		About Asia		National Geographic Specials		Dangerous Encounters		Wild Sex: Deviants/Macho Males/Femme Fatales/Swingers	
NBN				New Life TV Shopping		Teledyaryo	Diyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Sila?	Sea Games				Teledyaryo				Dial M		Bantay OCW With Susan K	
Nickelodeon	Blue's Clues/ What Planet Are You From	Rugrats	Hey Arnold!	My Life As A Teenage Robot/ Right On Top	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	SpongeBob SquarePants	Fairly Odd Parents	All That	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	Drake & Josh	The Fairly Odd Parents	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Rocket Power	Chalkzone	The Wild Thornberrys	The Angry Beavers	The Brothers Garcia
PBO			Pula		Tina My Tina Bukas Ang Bintana				Ikaw Lamang Hanggang Ngayon				Miguelito Ang Batang Rebelde				Sarah Geronimo: The Popstar		
Qtv		Endless Christmas (Navidad Sin Fin)	Mariana (Sin Escudo Concebido)	Cabecita	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Golden Bowl	Star	Laugh To Laugh: Ang Kulit	H3O Hahaha...Over!		All In	News On Q	Liga Ng Kababaihan		Groupee TV	
RPN 9	TV Shopping		Defenders Of The Earth	Hey Arnold!	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	As Told By Ginger	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	Scare Tactics	NBA On RPN					Newswatch Now	Simple Life 2	Cerge For Truth	
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping				Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		Sony Bmg Video			
Solar Sports		FIVB World Champs Cup Men's Event USA vs Ita				Denmark Open Men's Singles SF		Denmark Open Men's Doubles SF		Sagupaan		Sportsdesk		NBA Game Hornets @ Kings					NBA Inside Stuff
Sports Plus				This Is The PGA Tour		Ultimate Fighting Championship				NFL 2005: New England @ Buffalo						Target World Challenge Presented by Countrywide Final			
Star Movies	Ravenous			Basketball (4:10PM)				Challenge The Last Outpost (5:50 PM)			Prince William			The Sin Eater			Nature Unleashed: Fire (10:45PM)		
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Whose Line Is It Anyway?	Angel		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Friends	Married To The Kellys	Everybody Loves Raymond	King Of Queens	Becker	Monk		Friends	Married To The Kellys
Studio 23		Yugioh Duel Monster						Get Backers	Pinoy Big Brother	Wazzup Wazzup	The Swan Season 2		Tru Calling (8:20 PM)	Charmed (9:10 PM)		News Central	The West Wing		Travel Time

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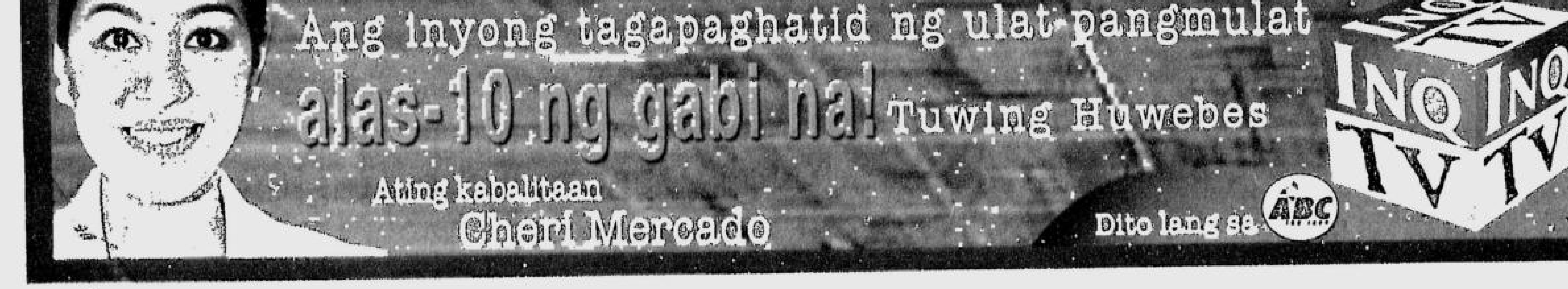
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MMFF final list

By Nini Valera

AS USUAL, NOTHING WENT ON AS planned at the press conference on Saturday to announce the last four entries to this year's Metro Manila Film Festival. The first batch of six was announced earlier.

A press conference scheduled at 3 p.m. was moved, without prior announcement, to 6 p.m.

This caught by surprise even Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando, overall festival chair. Like the media men, he had to wait for the viewing of the last movie in contention to finish.

"The prints came in so late," said Fernando.

After more than three hours, the verdict finally came in. The last four movies in are: Double Impact Films' "Terrorist Hunter," Teamworks' "Mourning Girls," Rocketts Productions' "Lagot Ka Sa Kuya Ko," and Regal Entertainment's "Blue Moon."

"Terrorist Hunter" will be shown starting Dec. 25, along with the previously approved six films: OctoArts/M-Zet's "Enteng Kabisote 2," Canary's "Kutob," Imus Productions' "Exodus," GMA Films/Regal's "Mulawin," Regal's "Ako Legal Wife" and Regal's "Shake, Rattle & Roll."

"Mourning Girls," "Lagot Ka" and "Blue Moon" will be shown starting Jan. 1. The nationwide festival ends second week of January, with exact dates varying in different cities.

In an exclusive interview, Fernando told Inquirer Entertainment, "There are so many problems. This is work for me, but I really don't mind. I'd like very much to help this industry."

He said he hoped to surpass last year's gross of P356-million.

The cash, at last!

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

WINNERS AND FINALISTS IN THE LOCAL digital competition of the 7th Cinemanila International Film Festival, held in October, may receive their cash prizes this week.

Manila city administrator Dino Nable relayed the news to two of the finalists, Jon Red and Paolo Villaluna.

Villaluna, co-director of "Ilusyon," a finalist, told Inquirer Entertainment on Saturday, "Mr. Nable just texted me that the checks will arrive before Friday." Finalists are supposed to receive P100,000 each.

Top prize is P1.5 million; runner-up, P1 million; third place, P750,000.

Villaluna and Red confirmed that some of the filmmakers sent follow-up letters to city hall.

"It wasn't a letter of protest; just an inquiry," clarified Red, director of "Cut."

Nable earlier told Inquirer Entertainment, "We [had to wait] for the funds from the city and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA). Part of the cash prizes is from NCCA."

Call for help

Mayor Lito Atienza of Manila, festival host city, earlier asked the Office of the President through Vic del Rosario, presidential consultant for entertainment, to help "defray the cost of the cash awards to be given to the winning entries in Cinemanila."

Del Rosario signed the memorandum addressed to President Macapagal-Arroyo. The call for help was one of several industry concerns that Del Rosario presented.

THE CASH/ A2-2

DIRECTOR Mark Reyes is confident that his new show will beat "Panday" in the ratings game.

"PAULEEN Luna is a fresh face," says the director. She is Odessa, from the kingdom of Hera Aega, the guardian of Olontre, a flower that gives immeasurable power.

NADINE Samonte is the young Reyna Mine-a, portrayed by Dawn Zulueta in the previous series. Mine-a is romantically linked to Raquim (Dennis Trillo) and Hagorn (Ping Medina)

'Etheria'
a step back in time

By Marinel R. Cruz
and Kathryn L. Reyes
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

WE HOPE TO MAINTAIN our standing as No. 1, though there are no guarantees. It's always good to have competition. But as my bosses would say, we [should] compete only with ourselves to make our product better."

Mark Reyes, one of the three directors of GMA 7's latest series, "Etheria," was reacting to a comment that his new *fantaserye* was made to take on "Panday," ABS-CBN's biggest TV production yet.

"Panday," with Jericho Rosales as lead character, boasts an all-star cast and high-budget special effects. "Etheria," prequel to the highly successful series "Encantadia," claims to have a bigger cast, better special effects and an enormous set with a floor area of 4,000 square meters.

"We have yet to see how the audience will perceive it. But the energy hasn't change. We all have the same passion that we had for 'Encantadia,'" Reyes told Inquirer Entertainment during a visit to the set in Pasig City on Thursday. "Never *akong tinipid ng* GMA *sa* request *ko*."

Reyes said he and his team were given only a few months to prepare for "Etheria," compared to "Encantadia," which took a year to put together. "I got into panic mode," Reyes said. "I thought we were ending 'Encantadia' and moving on to another project. But I was told, 'No,

'ETHERIA'/ A2-6

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2 CHICKEN LITTLE 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00
3 THE FOG 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
4 AN UNFINISHED LIFE 12:20 2.45 5:10 7:35 10.00
5 IN HER SHOES 1:35 4:20 7:05 9:50
6 JUST LIKE HEAVEN 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50
7 THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE 12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00
8 BILOG / CIRCLES 12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00
9 THE MYTH 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
10 PRIME 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 THE FOG 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00
2 CHICKEN LITTLE 12:00 1:35 3:10
THE MYTH 5:10 7:30 9:50
3 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE 12:00 3:20 6:40 9:50
4 AN UNFINISHED LIFE 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
5 IN HER SHOES 1230 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00
6 JUST LIKE HEAVEN 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00
7 THE EXORCISM of EMILY ROSE 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 9:50

METRO EAST 682-8193 / 682-8194

1 JUST LIKE HEAVEN 12:20 2:30 4:40 6:50 9:00
2 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE 11:40 2:40 5:40 9:00
3 CHICKEN LITTLE 12:15 2:00 3:45 5:30 7:15 9:00
4 THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE 12:00 2:15 4:30 6:45 9:00
5 AN UNFINISHED LIFE 12:05 2:15 4:25 6:40 9.00
6 IN HER SHOES 12:30 3:20 6:10 9:00
7 THE FOG 11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05
8 THE MYTH 2:00 4:30 7:00

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3228-30

1 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE
2 THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
3 IN HER SHOES
4 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
5 THE FOG
6 CHICKEN LITTLE

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2 HARI NG SABLAY
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

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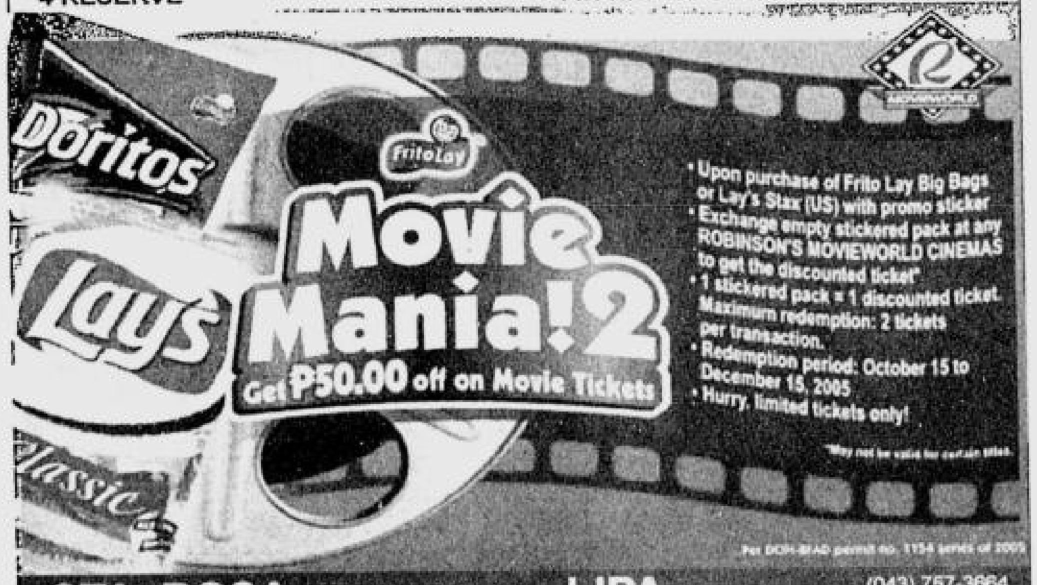
1 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE
2 THE FOG
3 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
4 IN HER SHOES



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All about OPM

FEEDBACK

Gov't out of line

From Sonny Hernandez, 122 Leviste St., Makati City (via email):

Government has no right to dictate what privately-owned radio stations should or should not air. Protectionism in the local music industry will do more harm than good to the listening public. If local music artists and producers want their music aired, they should produce better products.

Making us proud

From Ricci Santiago, Dammam, Saudi Arabia (via e-mail):

I support the government/VIVA's plan for an all OPM Radio Station.

I've been a music junkie for all my life, and I noticed these past few years that there are no more radio stations that play OPM songs every hour. The Danze Music Zone (89.1) plays all imported tunes, plus one to four OPM songs every hour, but still it was removed from the air. Now we have no choice but listen to hard-core ballad tunes of Imelda, Cuneta, Hadji, Eddie, and others at some AM Station. OPM Music is what makes us proud and sentimental especially while we're here abroad. Let us continue to support Filipino music, enough of those new imported tunes that is only revived again and again.

The cash, at last!

From page A2-1

Another letter "requesting for P5 million," dated Oct. 10 and signed by both Del Rosario and Atienza was sent to Ambeth Ocampo, NCCA chair. The festival was to open on Oct. 12.

Doy del Mundo, head of the NCCA Cinema Committee, recounted: "They wanted us to act on the request in time for the opening. But we couldn't, because our next meeting was set in November. In any case, the NCCA had earlier granted Cinemanila P300,000 to cover the MTRCB [review] fees."

To the top

Teddy Co, Cinema Committee member, added, "Since the committee didn't grant the request [at once], a [follow-up] letter was sent straight to the board of directors, through chair Ocampo and executive director Cecile Guidote-Alvarez on Oct. 14."

The board of directors also received a letter from Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, dated Nov. 7, "favorably endorsing... Mayor Atienza's [request] for financial assistance."

Process ignored

In its last meeting on Nov. 16, Co recalled, the Cinema committee was informed that Cinemanila's request had already been approved, but only in the amount of P1 million.

"The usual process in [seeking] a grant from the NCCA was not followed," Co explained. "They went straight to the board... [even if] the NCCA wasn't previously mentioned as a source of the festival cash prizes [aside from the city coffers]. I found that clumsy."

Del Rosario is chair and CEO of Viva Entertainment, which produced "Tuli," winner of the top prize, and "Ilusyon."

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ROUNDUP

Matt Damon weds

LOS ANGELES—Matt Damon married girlfriend Lucianne Bozan, 29, during a private ceremony Friday in New York City, his publicist said.

Damon, 35, and his bride were wed in a small ceremony at an undisclosed location, spokeswoman Jennifer Allen said. Bozan's 7-year-old daughter witnessed the ceremony.

Asked if Damon's friend, actor Ben Affleck, witnessed the wedding, Allen said no.

It is the first marriage for Damon, the second for Bozan, 29.

No, he won't

LOS ANGELES—Chris Rock won't be back to hand out Oscars next year.

"He is not hosting the Academy Awards," the comedian's publicist Matt Labov said in an e-mail to The Associated Press.

Labov told The New York Times that Rock did not want to do the show "in perpetuity" but would "like to do it again down the road."

Rock took over as host for the first time last year. He drew younger viewers, but his barbs skewering stars like Jude Law and Tobey Maguire alienated some members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Candidates for the hosting duties include Whoopi Goldberg, Steve Martin, Jay Leno and Conan O'Brien.

The 77th annual Academy Awards is set to air Feb. 27 from the Kodak Theater in Hollywood.

AP

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MTRCB GP
1.20, 3:20, 5:20, 7:20, 9.20

② THE FOG
MTRCB PG-13
12.00, 2.30, 5.00, 7:30, 10:00

③ HARRY POTTER 4
MTRCB GP
12 15, 3:30, 6:45, 10:00

④ IN HER SHOES
MTRCB PG-13
1.45, 4:30 7:15, 10:00

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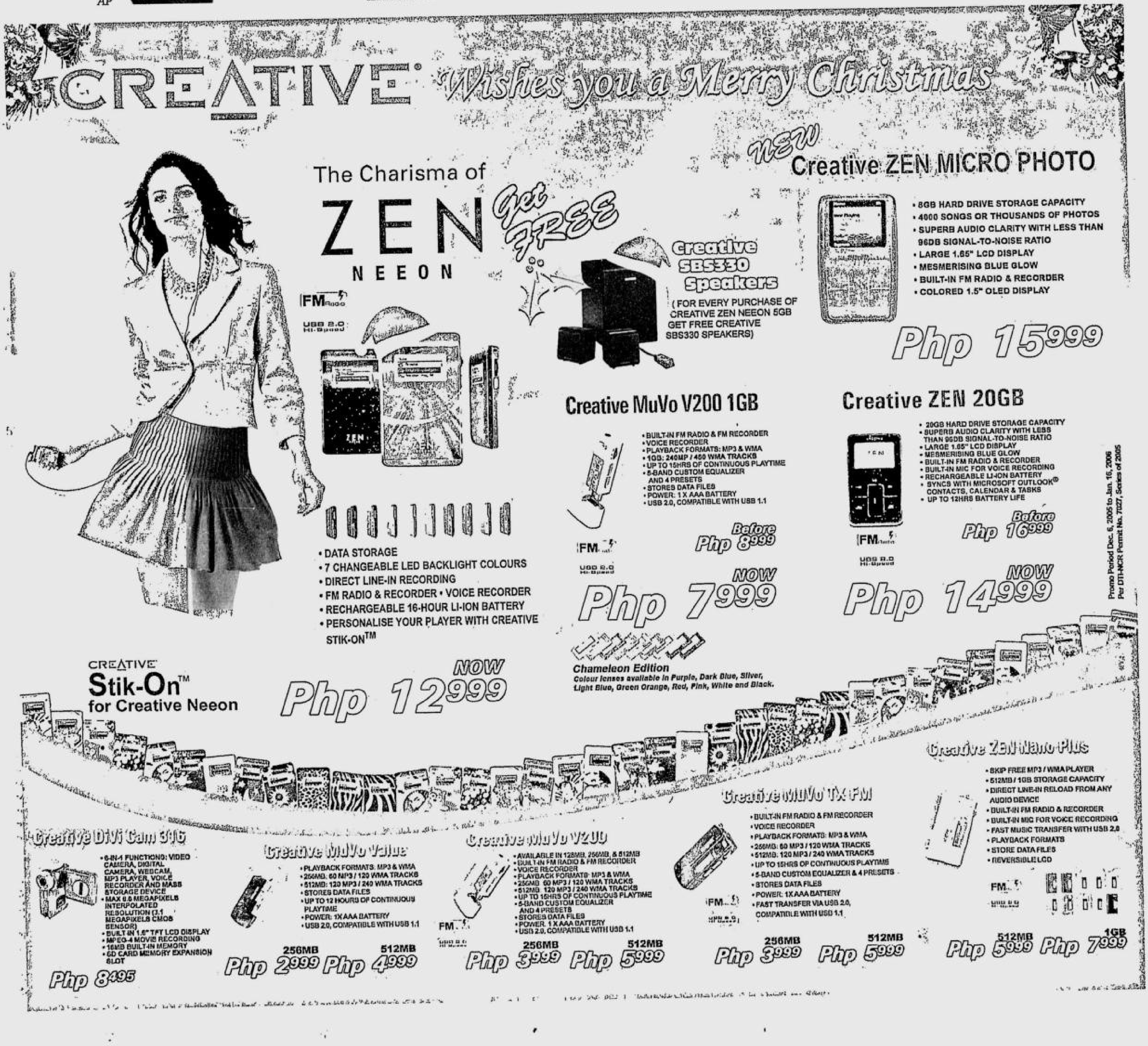

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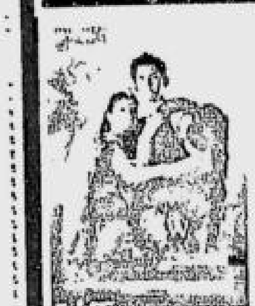
SCHEDULE AND EVENTS



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SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
Dec. 20 • Megamall • Cinema 3

KUTOB
Dec. 20 • The Podium • Cinema 2

ENTENG KABISOTE 2
Dec. 21 • The Podium • Cinema 2

EXODUS: TALES FROM THE ENCHANTED KINGDOM
Dec. 22 • Megamall • Cinema 9 & 10

BLUE MOON
Dec. 23 • Megamall • Cinema 10

MULAWIN
Dec. 23 • North Edsa • Cinema 1 & 2

GUARANTEED SEATS

THE PODIUM 633-8976

1 **IN HER SHOES**
12:35 FS/01:05MF/03:40/06:15
08:20LFS/09:00LMF/11:05END

2 **AN UNFINISHED LIFE**
01:20FS/1:50MF/04:10/06:30
08:20LFS/09:00LMF/10:40END

MEGAMALL

1 **THE FOG**
12:30FS/01:00MF/03:10/05:20
07:30/09:10LFS/09:40LMF/11:20END

CEBU (032) 231-3876

1 **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS**
12:00FS/12:05MF/01:54/03:48/05:42
07:36/09:21LFS/09:30LMF/11:15END

2 **THE FOG**
12:00FS/12:05MF/01:54/03:48/05:42
07:36/09:15LFS/09:30LMF/11:10END

3 **HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE**
12:00FS/12:15MF/03:20/06:25
09:05LFS/09:30LMF/12:10END

METRO MANILA

SM MEGAMALL
1. THE FOG
2. THE MYTH
3. EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
4. ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
5. MERRY CHRISTMAS
6. CHICKEN LITTLE
7. IN HER SHOES
8. HARI NG SABLAY
9. HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
10. AN UNFINISHED LIFE
11. JUST LIKE HEAVEN
12. THE MAN

SM CITY STA. MESA
1. AN UNFINISHED LIFE
2. THE FOG
3. HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
4. ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
5. EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
6. JUST LIKE HEAVEN
7. IN HER SHOES
8. THE MAN
9. HARI NG SABLAY
10. CHICKEN LITTLE

SM CITY BICUTAN
1. THE FOG
2. HARI NG SABLAY
3. THE MAN
4. CHICKEN LITTLE

SM VALENZUELA NOW OPEN
1. HARI NG SABLAY
2. EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
3. THE FOG
4. ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
1. MERRY CHRISTMAS
2. ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
3. JUST LIKE HEAVEN
4. HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
5. THE MYTH
6. HARI NG SABLAY
7. THE FOG
8. CHICKEN LITTLE
9. EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
10. IN HER SHOES
11. THE MAN
12. BLOODFIST 2050: THE LEGEND CONTINUES

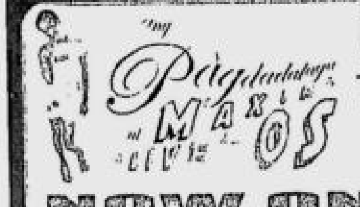
SM CITY SOUTHMALL
1. IN HER SHOES
2. CHICKEN LITTLE
3. THE FOG
4. HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
5. AN UNFINISHED LIFE
6. JUST LIKE HEAVEN
7. THE MAN
8. EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
9. ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
10. HARI NG SABLAY

SM SUPERCENTER SUCAT
1. THE MAN
2. IN HER SHOES
3. HARI NG SABLAY
4. THE FOG

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
1. THE MYTH
2. THE FOG
3. HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
4. ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
5. EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
6. JUST LIKE HEAVEN
7. IN HER SHOES
8. THE MAN

SM CITY MANILA
1. THE FOG
2. IN HER SHOES
3. MERRY CHRISTMAS
4. HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
5. THE MAN
6. AN UNFINISHED LIFE
7. ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
8. EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
9. HARI NG SABLAY
10. JUST LIKE HEAVEN
11. BLOODFIST 2050: THE LEGEND CONTINUES
12. THE MYTH

SM SAN LAZARO
1. IN HER SHOES
2. THE FOG
3. THE MAN
4. JUST LIKE HEAVEN
5. ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
6. HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE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LUZON

SM CITY PAMPANGA
1. HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
2. CHICKEN LITTLE
3. THE FOG
4. APRIL SNOW
5. THE MYTH
6. HARI NG SABLAY

SM CITY BAGUIO
1. THE FOG
2. THE MYTH
3. THE MAN
4. CHICKEN LITTLE

SM MOLINO NOW OPEN
1. HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
2. EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
3. ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
4. HARI NG SABLAY

SM CITY BACOOR
1. THE MAN
2. THE MYTH
3. HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
4. ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
5. EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
6. HARI NG SABLAY
7. THE FOG
8. JUST LIKE HEAVEN

SM CITY MARILAO
1. FOUR BROTHERS
2. HARI NG SABLAY
3. CHICKEN LITTLE
4. THE FOG

SM CITY DASMARINAS
1. HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
2. HARI NG SABLAY
3. THE FOG
4. CHICKEN LITTLE

SM CITY LUCENA
1. THE MYTH
2. EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
3. HARI NG SABLAY
4. CHICKEN LITTLE

SM CITY BATANGAS
1. EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
2. HARI NG SABLAY
3. THE MYTH
4. CHICKEN LITTLE

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU
1. DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS
2. THE FOG
3. HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
4. JUST LIKE HEAVEN
5. CHICKEN LITTLE
6. HARI NG SABLAY
7. ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
8. THE MYTH

SM CITY ILOILO
1. DOMINO
2. RESERVED
3. THE MYTH
4. ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
5. CHICKEN LITTLE
6. HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
7. RESERVED
8. THE FOG

SM CITY DAVAO
1. THE FOG
2. DOMINO
3. HARI NG SABLAY
4. THE MYTH
5. CHICKEN LITTLE
6. CRY WOLF

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
1. MY SASSY GIRL
2. THE MYTH
3. CHICKEN LITTLE
4. FOUR BROTHERS

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

*FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

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At the Activity Center

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	AYALA CENTER CEBU
Hyundai Car Exhibit December 5 to 7, 2005	Holiday Table Setting December 2 to 18, 2005 Acoustic Chiristmas Serenade w/ Chedi December 2, 9, 16	Pasko Sa Mt. Sinai December 7, 2005

AYALA GREENBELT

Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra Christmas Show
December 2 to 4 & 9 to 11 2005, GB 3 Park - 8PM
Christmas Fireworks Display
December 2 to 4 & 9 to 11 2005, GB 3 Park - 9PM

GREENBELT 1 Onstage

REPERTORY PHILIPPINES presents.
MAN OF LA MANCHA - The Musical
at REP's GLOBE THEATER
November 11 to December 18, 2005
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Ayala MUSEUM

Registration for Art Workshops now on-going at Ayala Museum
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AYALA CINEMAS

Reserve your seats by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.

Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification call 729 7777

G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 IN HER SHOES	2 THE FOG	3 ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS	4 AN UNFINISHED LIFE
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE	2 JUST LIKE HEAVEN	3 THX THE FOG 2 00, 4 15, 6 30, 8 45, 11 00 GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 AN UNFINISHED LIFE	5 CHICKEN LITTLE	6 JUST LIKE HEAVEN	7 KISS KISS BANG BANG
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 IN HER SHOES 12:10, 2:45, 5:20, 8:00	2 THE FOG 12:00, 2:15, 4:30, 6:45, 9:00		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX IN HER SHOES 1 00, 3 35, 6 10, 8 45, 11 20 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX JUST LIKE HEAVEN 1 30, 3 30, 5 30, 7 30, 9 30, 11 30 GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 AN UNFINISHED LIFE 2 00, 4 20, 6 40, 9 00, 11 20 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 THE FOG 2 00, 4.15, 6 30, 8 45, 11 00 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 KISS KISS BANG BANG 1 05, 3 10, 5 15, 7 20, 9 25, 11 30 GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX JUST LIKE HEAVEN	2 CHICKEN LITTLE		
	3 IN HER SHOES	4 AN UNFINISHED LIFE	5 THE FOG	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 THE FOG	2 A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE	3 JUST LIKE HEAVEN	4 CHICKEN LITTLE

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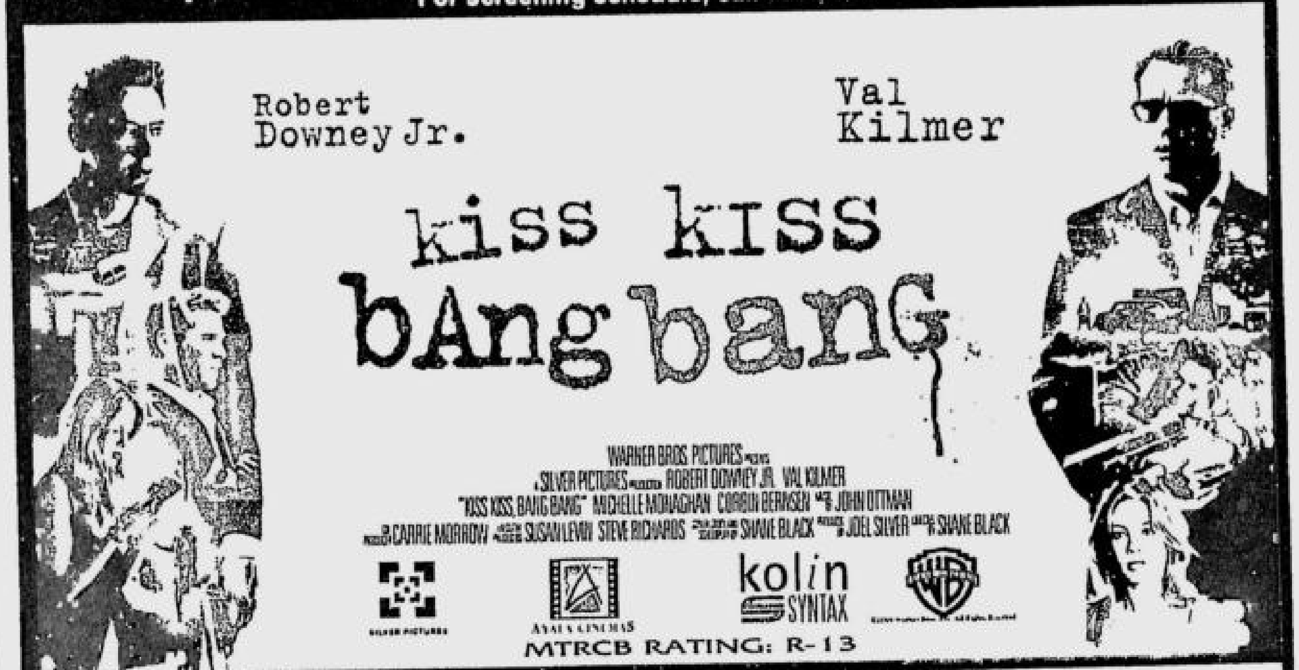
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MTRCB RATING: R-13

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① The Fog
② Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire
③ Just Like Heaven
④ In Her Shoes
⑤ Chicken Little

EVENTS! EVENTS!

MARKET! MARKET!
The fun is in the finds

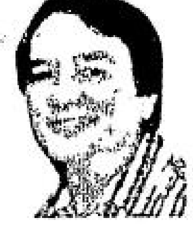
Holiday Fireworks Show

November 20, 27
December 4, 11, 18 and 25
7 pm at the Playzone

Market! Market! Simbang Gabi
at the 5th level lobby
Dec. 15 - 23, 6:30 pm

What's cooking on TV?

VIEWFINDER



Nestor U. Torre

FOR SOME DELECTABLE REASON, there are many cooking shows on both free and cable TV these days. Having viewed most of them, we can say that one of the best such programs is the Japanese production, "Iron Chef."

The quintessential cookfest has a competition format. Two expert chefs are pitted against each other every week, creating dishes highlighting a specific ingredient, like truffles, sea urchin or tofu.

At the end of one hour, a panel of experts tastes each cook's dishes, evaluates them, and chooses a winner.

Most often, it's the resident "chef emeritus" who wins over the younger challengers. One of the few times he lost, it was to a French chef—there's a colonial lesson to be learned somewhere there!

Cult classic

"IRON CHEF" has become a culinary cult classic due to its excessively schmaltzy and reverential treatment of the culinary arts. There's no denying the creativity of the competing chefs, but the jurors' flowery descriptions of them make lofty Baked Alaska mountains out of a dirty ice cream.

Capping the florid visual and verbal display is the show's host/producer, a colorfully idiosyncratic chap who dresses like an Asian Liberace.—Over the top!

The success of "Iron Chef" has spawned a number of imitators—or emulators, as the case may be—including an American version of the original Japanese show, and another spin-off involving not two competing chefs, but two teams of cooks vying for the top prize each week.

Debit side

THAT show's ok, but the original program is better.

These days, the plot, as well as the sauce, thickens—because a relatively new local TV show, "Ka-Toque," has started telecasting on Channel 11. Like the American spin-off, it features teams of cooks, only this time they interact with a celebrity each week, and it's the celebrity who decides which dishes are the most delicious.

The show is viewable enough, and there are good cooking lessons to be learned.

On the debit side, the young cooks tend to talk at the same time, making it difficult to figure out what they're saying. Youthful passion and frisky energy are fine, but don't forget that you're on TV to communicate, folks.

Choose guests!

IN ADDITION, the week we caught the show, the featured celebrity was both nervous and dull—a weird combination, but there it is. Instead of helping to keep the show interesting, the guest celebrity dragged it down.

To improve, therefore, the show should choose better guests, and the competing chefs should stop chattering loudly in unison.

Meanwhile, we'll continue to watch "Iron Chef," where it all began—even if we have to put up with its host-producer, who could give Liberace a run for his beads, bangles and bows!

'Angels in America'

ON DEC. 14 at 10:30 p.m., HBO screens the acclaimed mini-series on AIDS, "Angels in America." The first chapter is titled "Bad News." At 11:40 p.m., the second chapter, "In Vitro" will be telecast. Not to be missed.

Mon David

AT 9:45 p.m. on Dec. 14, much-admired singer **Mon David** once again showcases his electic musical taste and improvisational style at Magnet, Katipunan, Q.C. Lineup of songs includes jazz "evergreens" and tracks from Mon's lates CD, "Life & Times."

Joining him are veteran musicians **Mark Lopez** on keyboards, **Meong Pacana** on bass, **Mike Guevarra** on sax, and **Koko Bermejo** on drums. Call 435-2631.

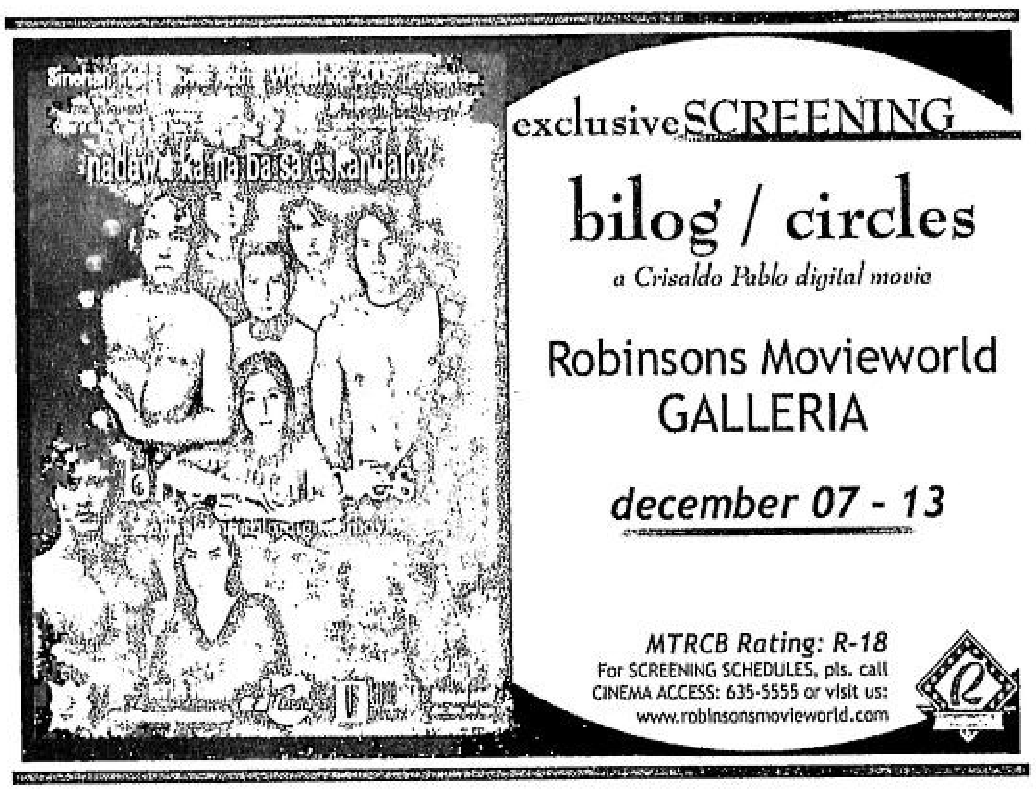
'The Polar Express' on DVD

THE TWO-DISC special edition of **Robert Zemecki's** "The Polar Express" is filled with a trainload of special features, including a **Josh Groban** video, a never-before-heard song, special effects featurettes, and game challenges for children of all ages. The movie's cast of voice actors is led by **Tom Hanks**.

Jed Madela

JED MADELA performs for his fellow Ilonggos in the concert, "Christmas with the Voice," at SM Cinema 6 in Iloilo City on Dec. 16 and 17. On Dec. 30, he sings at Aruba Bar & Restaurant, Metrowalk, Pasig City.

Jed's first major concert will be held at Music Museum on Jan. 27, 2006, with direction by **Floy Quintos** and **Mark Lopez**. E-mail gm_proponents@yahoo.com.



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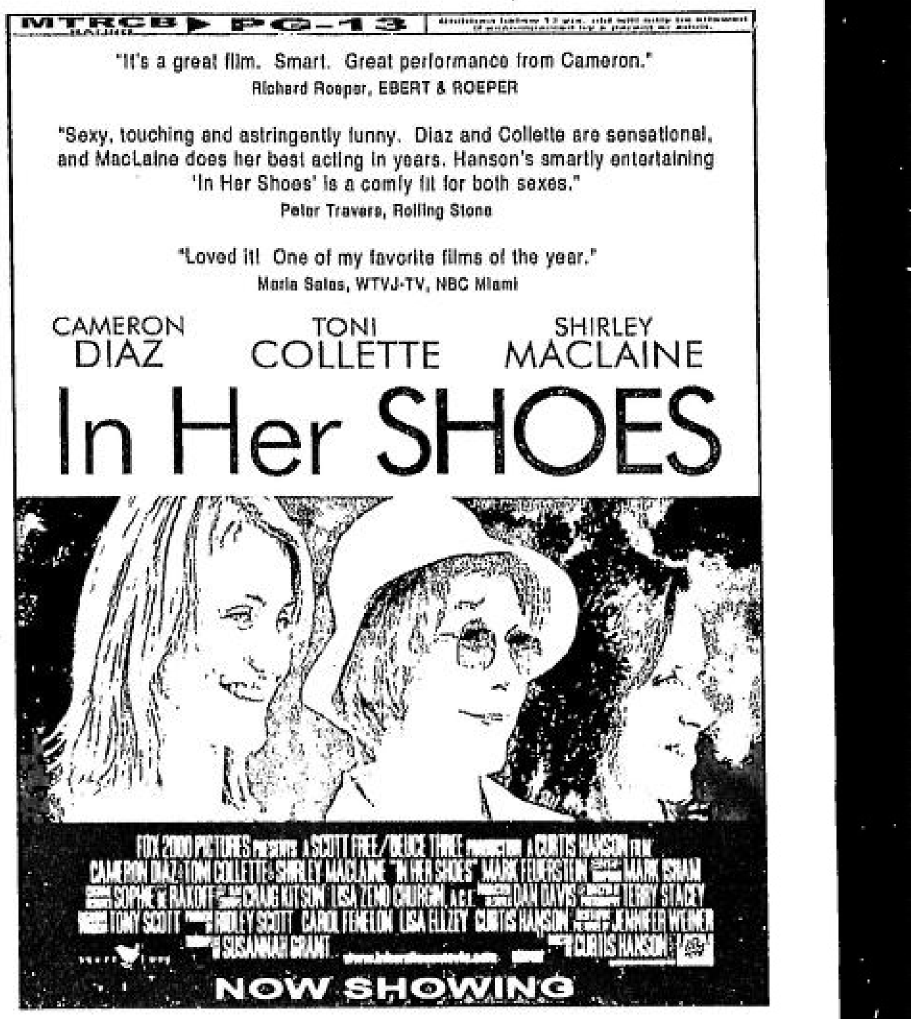

MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13

"It's a great film. Smart. Great performance from Cameron."
Richard Roeper, EBERT & ROEPER

"Sexy, touching and astringently funny. Diaz and Collette are sensational, and MacLaine does her best acting in years. Hanson's smartly entertaining 'In Her Shoes' is a comfy fit for both sexes."
Peter Travers, Rolling Stone

"Loved it! One of my favorite films of the year."
Maria Salas, WTVJ-TV, NBC Miami

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In Her SHOES

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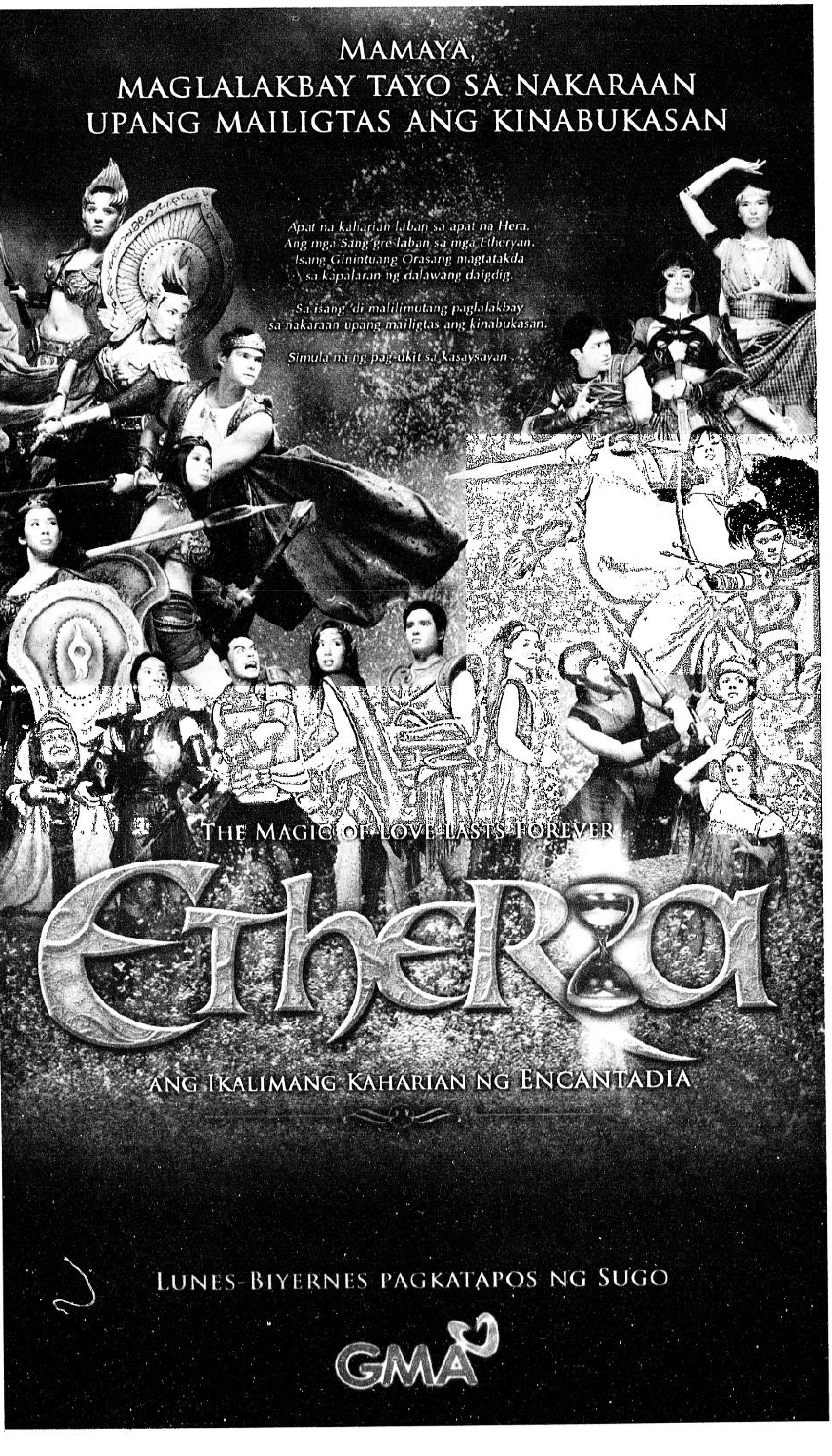

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Etheria
ANG IKALIMANG KAHARIAN NG ENCANTADIA
LUNES-BIYERNES PAGKATAPOS NG SUGO
GMA

"WE REMAIN true to our promise to always improve ourselves," GMA 7 SVP for TV entertainment Wilma Galvante, extreme left, tells the movie press as she introduces "Etheria" cast.

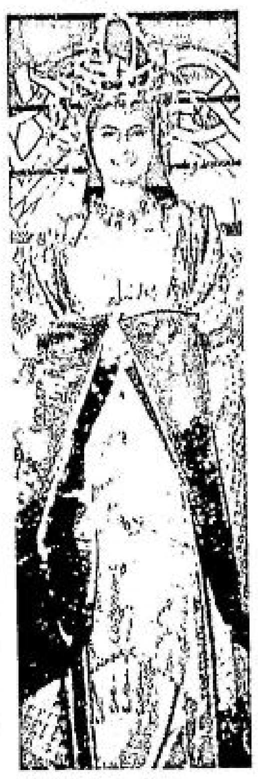
'Etheria'

From page A2-1

you're extending. *Bumalik kami sa nakaraan.* This is a bigger challenge. We have a working team of five writers. We also have a think tank that includes me and the producers. Even the actors now share their ideas because they know their characters well."

Reyes pointed out that the "Etheria" set is currently divided into the four kingdoms in the story—Hera Andal, Hera Sensa, Hera Aega and Hera Volo. "The set is still evolving. Outside this covered air-conditioned warehouse is the first outdoor back lot set in the country. Our rival always points out, 'Puro indoor scenes *na lang*.' Now we'll give you an outdoor studio."

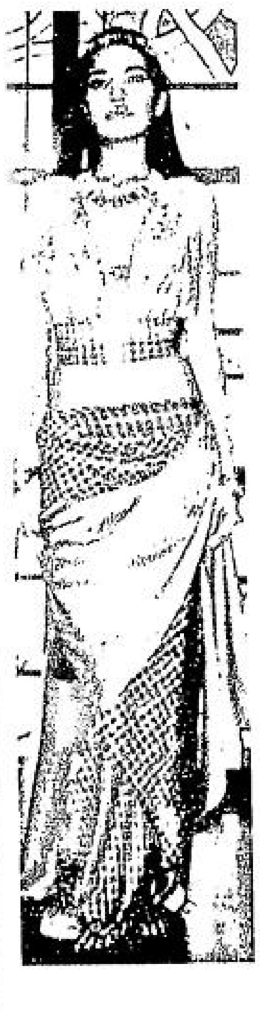
Reyes works closely with megman Gil Tejada Jr. for "Etheria." Dingdong Dantes, who plays lead character Ybrahim, is third unit director.



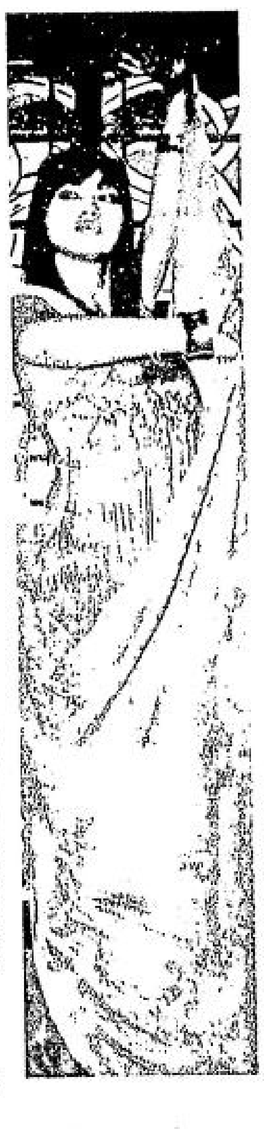
DIANA Zubiri as Danaya, bearer of the earth stone and queen of Lireo

EMPRESS Schuck, Rainier Castillo, Aiza Marquez, Ella Guevarra and BJ Forbes

"FRANCINE is the best person we can think of to play Avria, leader of Hera Andal and queen of Etheria," says Reyes.

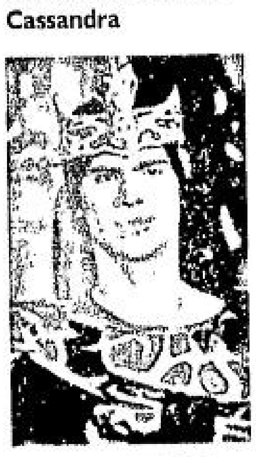


"ONLY Alessandra de Rossi can go head-to-head with Sunshine Dizon *pagdating sa tarayan*," Reyes says. Andora, who comes from Hera Sensa, has the ability to look into the past of any person she touches.



"JOPAY Paguia can move, she's a dancer, she can fight," says Reyes. She is Juvila, a soldier from Hera Volo, who possess the power to stop time.

ELLA GUEVARRA as Cassandra



PAOLO PARAISO as Anime

SID LUCERO as Asval, chief of the forces of Sapiro

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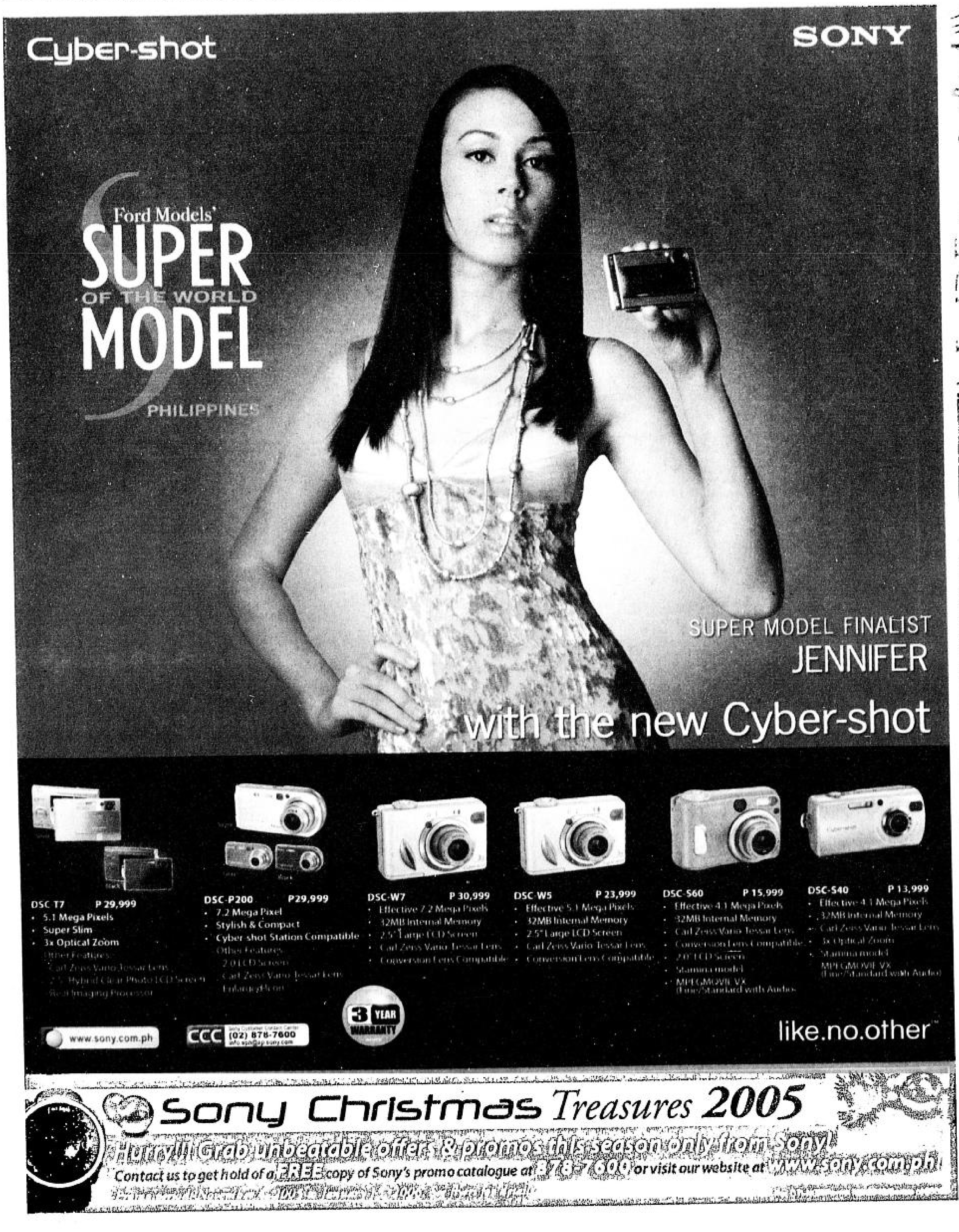

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Gov't to privatize postal service in '06

As Philpost turns around with P99-M profit

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT HAS DEcided to privatize Philippine Postal Corp. (Philpost) through a direct sale of government shares as it placed the state-owned firm under the list of major public assets to be sold in 2006.

Another privatization option being studied previously was to offer government shares in Philpost through an initial public offering.

Finance Undersecretary Gabriel Singson Jr. told reporters that the privatization through direct sale of shares has been approved by the Privatization Council, which believed it was timely to sell the asset given its recent financial turnaround.

The finance official, who is in charge of the government's privatization efforts, noted that after accumulating losses, Philpost finally recorded an income in 2004.

Documents showed that the state-owned firm posted a net income of P99 million as revenues rose 3.2 percent to P3.67 billion.

"It has successfully been turned around. It is timely to pursue its privatization plan because of its improving finances. The improved financial position was both due to lower operating cost and higher sales," Singson said.

Philpost was established under RA 7354, or the Postal Service Act of 1992.

Singson said the government would hire a financial adviser to guide authorities in the sale of state assets in Philpost and to determine the exact and proper timing next year when the privatization should be best undertaken.

The Arroyo administration has adopted the policy of privatizing state assets which could be better run by the private sector.

GOV'T/ B4

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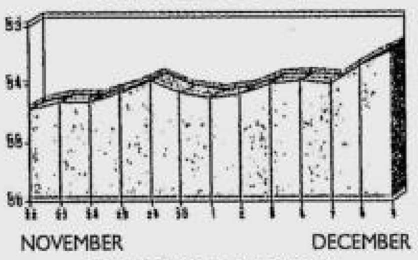

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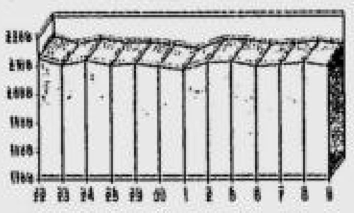

(See stock market report on Page B11)

Stocks seen moving up

DESPITE A LETHARGIC WEEK, ANALYSTS said the stock market could be back in positive territory this week as it tracks fourth-quarter earnings projections.

"The outlook is still bullish as earnings for the fourth quarter are expected to remain positive given the generally strong performance in the third quarter. We expect accumulation to continue," BPI Trade said in an online weekly report.

STOCKS/ B4

WHAT'S INSIDE

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OFW dollars fail to spur Philippine economy /B12

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Half full or half empty?

No Free Lunch

Cielito F. Habito

I'M AFRAID I'VE BEEN COMING ACROSS AS a public pessimist lately, especially after being quoted in the past week for a presentation I have made to various audiences, where I dispute the Palace claim that the economy is verging on a take-off.

I would normally hate to be the one claiming the economic situation is that of being half-empty, when others may portray it as half-full. After all, it used to be my job to proclaim the bright side of our economic situation in order to muster business confidence. I've known full well that perceptions could shape reality in the matter of economic performance. Government economic managers have an inevitable "cheerleader" function. Thus, it is said that the perceptive listener should discount a few points from official projections on the economy to account for this cheerleading element in the government forecasts.

Wrong direction

But for such cheerleading to work, it must at least be credible. People must feel that things are really improving for the proclamation of an economic take-off to become self-fulfilling. And this must be reflected in trends in the basic economic indicators that matter.

Ask the common folk how they tell if the economy is improving or not, and they will invariably come back to you with *presyo, hanapbuhay at kita* (prices, jobs and income) as the things that they feel directly. Government may cite all sorts of statistics to argue that the economy is getting better, but in the end, it is these three things that really count.

This is where I have a problem. The latest economic statistics released by the government further reinforce my observation that these most basic of economic data are moving in the wrong direction to be described as indicative of a take-off.

Take prices. Price increases picked up again in November to a 7.1-percent annual increase, from 7 in the previous month. The year-to-date average is 7.8 percent, up from the 5.5 percent average last year, and the 3.1 percent average posted in the two years prior to that.

Jobless growth

According to the July quarterly labor survey, 889,000 new jobs were generated within the past year, meaning from July 2004 to July 2005. There are three problems with this latest employment report. One, it is well short of the minimum target of one million new jobs a year (from the six-year target of 6-10 million jobs up to 2010) if the economy is to bring unemployment rates down to levels comparable with our neighbors. Two, it is much lower than the 1.2 million jobs created in the previous year, or the July 2003-July 2004 period. And three, the underemployment rate—the proportion of employed workers who feel their jobs are inadequate and would therefore like to have more work—rose significantly from 17.6 percent in July 2004 to 20.5 percent in July 2005. In short, more than one out of five workers are not even working enough. And yet this worsening of the job situation is happening while the economy, according to the data, is actually growing. We continue to see the phenomenon economists have come to call "jobless growth."

Progressively slower

The third piece of bad news is that growth in gross domestic product (GDP), which measures the level of aggregate production—and thus aggregate income—within the country, has slowed substantially to 4.1 percent in the third quarter of 2005, its lowest since 2002. The government has already given up on meeting even the low end of its target GDP growth range of 5.3-6.3 percent. What is quite striking is that for six quarters now, GDP growth has been progressively slowing down, since posting 7.4-percent annual growth in the second quarter of last year. Even well before the third quarter dip, declaring an economic take-off was—to say the least—highly inconsistent with what the official data were telling us.

Even Neda Director General Tito Santos has had to contradict his boss by admitting in a statement before the weekend that the economy is "probably not in a take-off stage." He hastens to add that neither is it undergoing a meltdown, in apparent reaction to reports that I had said so. I must clarify that I never declared that the economy is actually on a meltdown; what I have been saying is that with the basic numbers moving in the wrong direction, it feels more like a meltdown than a take-off.

More downturns

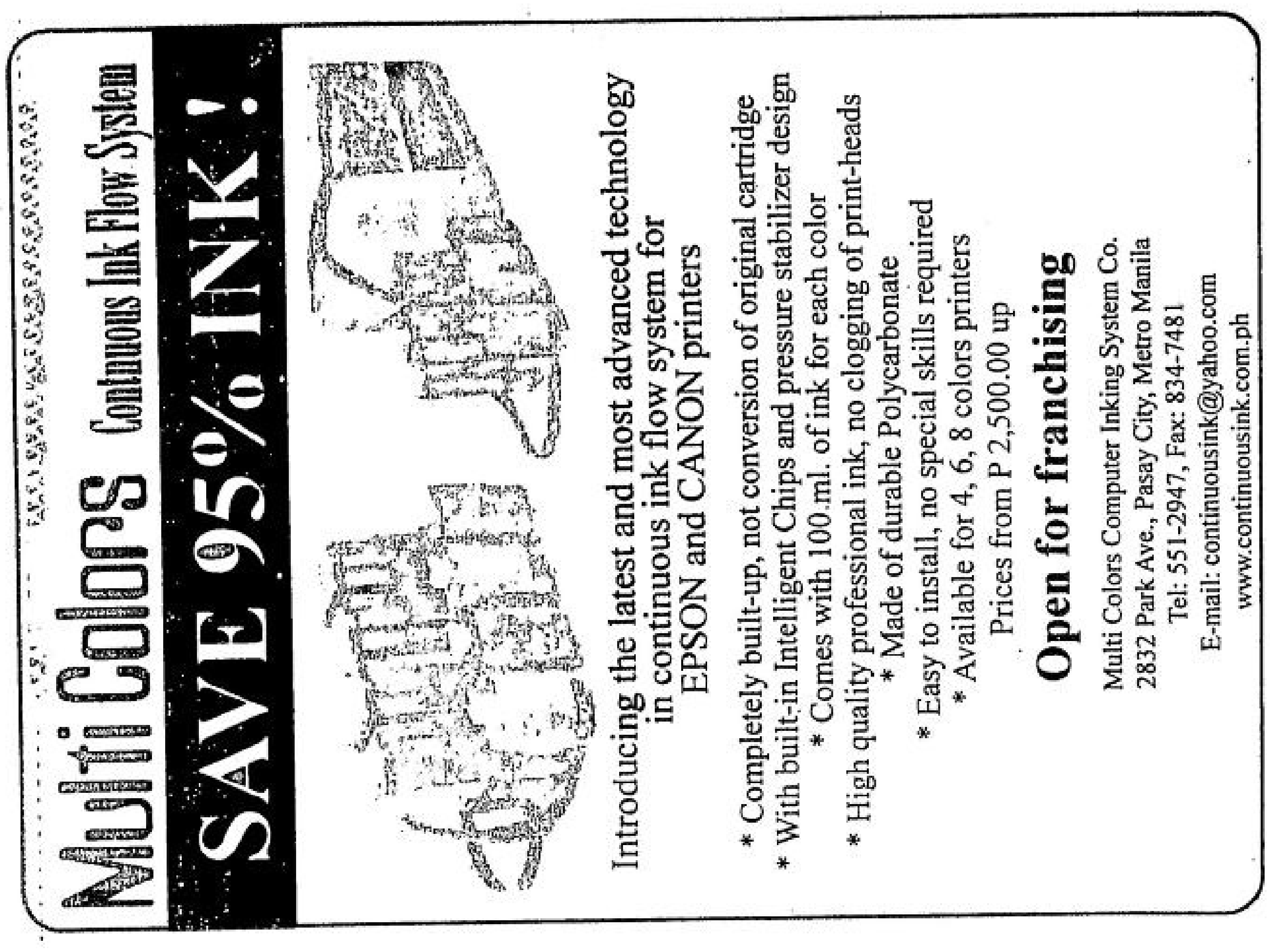
There's even more bad news. Early in the year, I was mentioning among the "good news" portion of my briefings that one bright spot in the economy was the positive and significant growth in both private and public construction. But public construction turned negative (-4.8 percent) in the second quarter, and it was only private construction (5 percent) that pushed the industry to still manage some modest growth. But now even that has turned the other way, with both public and private construction dropping (-4.8 and -4.2 percent, respectively).

The other disturbing development is that the services sector, consistently the growth leader in the economy, has also slowed down for the third quarter in a row. From a hefty first quarter growth of 7.1 percent, it is now down to 5.1 percent. Quite notably, even the dynamic telecommunications sector has slowed down to a single-digit growth rate of 9.7 percent, after consistently growing by double-digits in past years. Is the Filipinos' love affair with text messaging beginning to wane?

Should we say, then, that the glass is half full, or half empty? The answer, to me, is quite simple. If the level is moving upward, then it's more logical to say that we're half full.

The problem is, the numbers tell me we are moving the other way around.

Comments are welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu



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Ready, AIM, retire

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

THE BOARD OF THE ASIAN INstitute of Management has accepted the resignation of its president, former Finance Secretary Roberto de Ocampo, effective May 15, 2006.

De Ocampo, who is going into his seventh year as president of the region's first MBA school, has expressed desire to spend more time with his US-based family with his reaching retirement age next month, according to the pro-De Ocampo grapevine.

De Ocampo was in England attending a conference on emerging market economies at Oxford with his former boss, former President Fidel Ramos, when the AIM trustees voted last Monday to accept his resignation letter.

Before that, De Ocampo had already sounded off AIM co-vice chairs Washington Sycip and Jose Cuisia Jr. about his plan, according to the grapevine.

While accepting his resignation, AIM also voted for De Ocampo to come on board as fellow trustee after May 15.

Invited for his reputed rainmaking skills, De Ocampo had the difficult task of enlarging the AIM endowment base while the Asian currency crisis and globalization were gutting down the country's manufacturing and financial sectors, the school's traditional benefactors.

AIM was having difficulty keeping up with principal payments for the P200 million of the original P400-million loan it borrowed from Philippine National Bank to fund the construction of its new building, and had to seek restructuring with the state-owned Development Bank of the Philippines.

Even its mainstay overseas funder, Ford Foundation, pulled out its Manila office and relocated to Vietnam, to reflect the changed geo-political considerations of its American benefactors.

In partnership with the Makati Business Club, whom it shares key leaders, AIM has become ground zero for US-style corporate governance reforms, thanks to a USAID grant, that swept through the

COCKTALES/ B4

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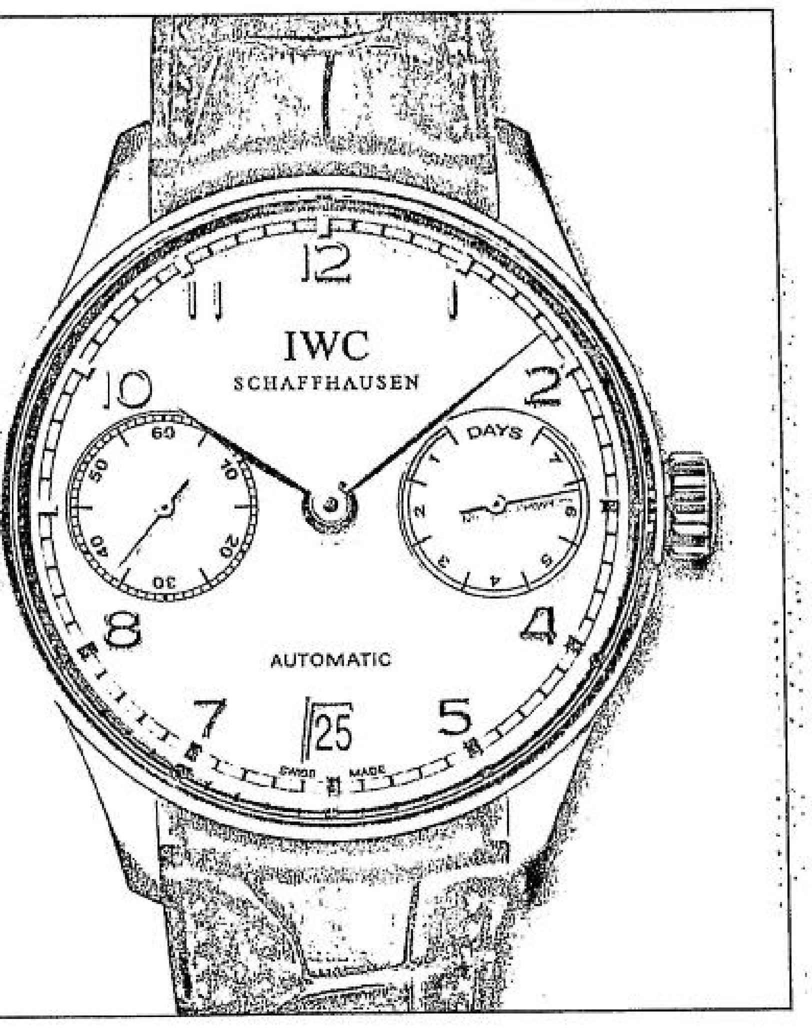

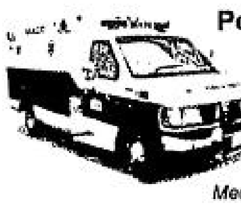

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Altis 1.6 E A/T	800,000	100,000	59,539	41,000	32,688	23,326	18,822	16,244
Altis 1.6 E M/T	765,000	100,000	56,388	38,831	30,962	22,094	17,828	15,385
Altis 1.6 J M/T	708,000	100,000	51,257	35,297	28,150	20,088	16,209	13,985

MODEL	SRP	DOWNPAYMENT	12	18	24	36	48	60
Innova 2.5 G A/T	1,045,000	100,000	82,039	56,495	45,014	32,122	25,919	22,384
Innova 2.5 G M/T	980,000	100,000	76,188	52,466	41,807	29,834	24,073	20,787
Innova 2.0 G A/T	985,000	100,000	76,638	52,776	42,054	30,010	24,215	20,910
Innova 2.0 G M/T	930,000	100,000	71,687	49,366	39,341	28,074	22,653	18,559
Innova 2.5 E M/T	885,000	100,000	67,636	46,576	37,121	26,489	21,374	18,454
Innova 2.5 J M/T	798,000	100,000	59,804	41,183	32,829	23,427	18,903	16,317
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TOYOTA

Cocktales

From page B3

country's publicly-listed companies.

Shrinking billionaire

NOW that she has been appointed executrix of the estate of her billionaire aunt, legal ethics lecturer Victoria delos Reyes has made herself scarce from the probate hearings at the Makati Regional Trial Court.

Delos Reyes, who personally knows the judge handling the case, has not attended the last five court dates since August, and instead sent lawyers from Accra to fend off attempts from other estate claimants to cross-examine the newly minted billionaire.

Another hearing is scheduled on Friday.

4th time offender

A WEDNESDAY item about former Solicitor General Francisco Chavez suffered a slight terminological inexactitude.

The decorum-challenged lawyer was found not to have thrice violated the forum-shopping rules as we had reported, but actually four times.

The Cagayan de Oro-based 21st Division of the Court of Appeals, composed of Justices Edgardo Camello, Teresita Dy-Liacco Flores and Myrna Dimaranan-Vidal, noted with distaste the "contumacious" tactics that the Chavez law firm had resorted to in order to stave off the foreclosure of its client Victoria Plaza of Davao City.

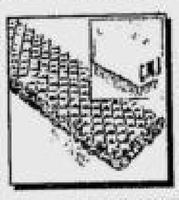
"Forum shopping is not only 'contumacious' but also deplorable because it adds to the congestion of the heavily burdened dockets of the courts," the three justices wrote, quoting an earlier Supreme Court decision.

Owned by spouses Robert Alan and Nancy Lee Limso, the Davao city mall was extrajudicially foreclosed by Philippine National Bank after the mall's bad debt had ballooned to more than P1 billion.

Heard through the grapevine

THE MANUEL Nieto-Benito Araneta group in the publicly listed Philcomsat Holdings suffered yet another blow after their pointman, a Sigma Rho lawyer-director, has been ordered suspended for two months by the Supreme Court.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)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Alcatel sees huge opportunity in Philippine market

The growing need for efficient telecommunications in vertically oriented sectors has prompted Alcatel, the leading global telecommunications provider, to expand its focus in the Philippines. Mr. Herve Pourcines, Alcatel Philippines President and Country Senior Officer, is spearheading the company's drive to grow market share in sectors such as government, utilities, hospitality, health care and transportation, where there are excellent opportunities for expansion.

According to Mr. Pourcines, industries such as transportation, utilities and health care are key, especially since these sectors are critical to the country's economic growth. Alcatel will provide project management and consultancy services to key players in vertical markets in these areas.

"We believe that Alcatel can leverage its experience as a global leader in DSL and broadband, even as we provide innovations in cutting-edge areassuch as WiMax and Next Generation Networks," said Mr. Pourcines.

Alcatel in the worldwide leader in DSL solutions, where the company has a 37.8 percent share of the market. Alcatel is also at the cutting edge of next-generation technologies such as WiMax.

Recently, Alcatel was selected by Telstra as a strategic partner its ground breaking IP network transformation project. As part of the proposed five-year agreement worth USD 2.55 billion, Alcatel will provide Telstra with comprehensive network solutions and end-to-end integration capabilities.

Alcatel is a global leader in wireless network solutions such as GSM, and is at the cutting edge of 3G infrastructure development.

ALCATEL

Real estate loans rose 2.4% in 3rd quarter

By Doris C. Dumlao

COMMERCIAL BANK LENDING TO the real estate sector picked up in the third quarter of the year by 2.4 percent after two consecutive quarters of contraction, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported.

The BSP said that for the third quarter, the banking sector recorded P4.7 billion in additional real estate lending exposure, while new investment in securities held by real estate companies was contained at P141 million.

The industry's combined real estate loans as of end-September rose by 2.5 percent to P188.9 billion from P184.3 billion last quarter, halting two quarters of decline.

The total outstanding loans exclusive of inter-bank loans declined by 5 percent, raising the ratio of real estate loans to 11.9 percent from 11.1 percent. This ratio went up from 11.6 percent a year ago.

The bulk of the real estate loans were granted by the bank proper with a share of 97.1 percent while the remainder was lent by trust departments.

Loans disbursed for the construction and development of real estate properties for commercial purposes including infrastructure projects comprised 83.5 percent or P157.8 billion.

The remaining 16.5 percent or P31.1 billion was used for the acquisition of residential units by individual homeowners and borrowers.

Past-due real estate loans dropped by 4.5 percent to P36.1 billion from P37.7 billion a quarter ago, pulling down the ratio of past-due real estate loans to 19.1 percent of total loans from 20.5 percent. The ratio likewise stood better than 20.4 percent a year ago.

Real estate loans accounted for 92 percent of the P205.4 billion in total commercial bank exposure to the real estate industry.

The remaining 8 percent was in the form of investments in securities issued by real estate companies.

The combined real estate loan and securities investment exposure of the commercial bank sector stood at 6 percent of total loans, higher than the 5.7 percent last quarter but lower than 6.3 percent a year ago.

PAL eyes fleet upgrade of wide-bodied planes

By Clarissa S. Batino

PHILIPPINE AIRLINES IS PLANNING to follow up a recent deal to modernize its smaller planes with a similar upgrading of its bigger aircraft used for long trips, its top official said.

PAL president Jaime Bautista said the flag carrier needed to modernize and beef up its wide-bodied fleet to expand operations to the United States, its biggest and most profitable overseas market.

These nine aircraft, mostly Boeing 747s dedicated to long trips, were already between seven and 12 years old.

"We will lease or buy. The problem with wide-bodied planes is that they're expensive," he said. It was difficult to secure a lease contract and yet funding the acquisition would also be tough because of the cost, Bautista added.

In the long run, he said that buying or leasing brand-new aircraft would be more cost efficient. PAL, he said, has yet to decide whether to go for Boeing or for Airbus jets.

PAL signed last week a deal to buy nine narrow-bodied aircraft from Airbus and lease four brand-new Airbus planes. The list price of the nine planes plus an option to buy five more was $840 million. Acquisition cost, however, is usually lower than the quoted price.

The deal with Airbus will address the fleet used for domestic and regional trips. Flights to India, for instance, will be launched next year. Expanding operations in Japan and China were also being reviewed.

The flag carrier, which had been reviving routes that are becoming viable again, was preparing to launch flights to Los Angeles in the US from Cebu by late next year, Bautista had said earlier.

Overseas flights account for 70 percent of PAL's total sales and easily half is accounted for by the US operations. The remaining 30 percent comes from domestic routes.

PAL is the only Philippine carrier flying to the United States.

"We want to tap more of the US market. And also to protect our market share," Bautista said. PAL is just using two thirds of the available flight entitlements to the United States. Bautista said the plan to modernize its fleet between 2006 and 2008 should improve the company's on-time performance, boost its image and allow it to fly to more domestic and regional routes.

Fuel and maintenance costs, which account for more than 40 percent of overhead, should become less of a factor in operations.

PAL's fuel factor is now at more than 30 percent against only 17 percent before world petroleum prices started going up.

Stocks seen moving up

From page B1

BPI Trade said investors took profits on jitters over oil prices breaching $60 a barrel and renewed political noise.

For the week, the main stock index lost 14.64 points or 0.69 percent to 2,100.25. Leading the decline were Ayala Corp., Globe Telecom, San Miguel, BPI, First Holdings, Banco de Oro, SM Prime, ABS-CBN, Manila Water, DMCI Holdings and Aboitiz Equity Ventures.

BPI Trade said property stocks weakened on concerns over higher interest rates.

AB Capital Securities echoed the same sentiment, saying higher interest rates loomed next year.

It added that political uncertainty has reared back its ugly head, prompting investors to be cautious.

"The attention has shifted to the political arena and this is definitely not a positive signal for the market. Of course, investors would want to get a closure of the so called "Garci" issue, which has tagged the President as having allegedly cheated in the last presidential elections. Instead, it seems like Garci's emergence has only rekindled and worsened political tensions, which otherwise was on the way to normalizing," AB Capital said. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

Gov't to privatize postal service in '06

From page B1

Proceeds from the privatization of state assets would be used to finance various infrastructure projects, which have not been provided sufficient funds because of the government's lingering fiscal problem.

Singson said the government officially aims to generate at least P500 million next year from its privatization program, although he said fiscal authorities were optimistic that the government could easily breach the target given the number of assets scheduled to be privatized next year.

Aside from Philpost, the list of assets to be privatized next year also included RPN Channel 9, IBC Channel 13 and PNOC-Energy Development Corp.

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PLDT eyes Internet-based broadcast media venture

By Clarissa S. Batino

HONG KONG—AFTER FAILING TO acquire a satellite-based pay TV company, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. is now planning to venture into an Internet-based broadcast media, known as IPTV (Internet Protocol Television).

PLDT chair Manuel V. Pangilinan confirmed that talks with Philippine Multi-Media System Inc., operator of Dream Satellite TV, had bogged down.

This, he said, was the reason behind the shelving of the plan to go into direct-to-home TV (DTH) business with American content provider Echostar.

IPTV uses Internet or broadband connection to broadcast programs and content, while DTH uses either satellite or cable to give subscribers access to popular programs.

The country's largest telecom company is now looking at a business model similar to what Li Ka-shing's son, Richard Li, had done to Hong Kong-based telephone firm PCCW, Pangilinan noted.

PCCW, formerly Hong Kong Telecom, ventured into IPTV a few years ago.

According to Pangilinan, PCCW's IPTV now has more than half-a-million subscribers.

PCCW owns a Hong Kong fiber-optic network and provides Internet services. It is now the city's dominant carrier operating 3.5 million phone lines.

IPTV will allow PLDT to broadcast content through high-speed Internet or broadband and the same time give subscribers access to the web and cheap calls through the Internet, called Voice over IP.

"As talks with Dream and Bayantel are not proceeding, we have to reassess our approach on the video business," he said. "The question is, does it make sense to go into DTH right now when IPTV is proving to be more versatile and less expensive?"

PLDT, he said, would evaluate whether it would be wiser to adopt a new technology like IPTV as what PCCW had done or stick with the existing system.

For now, PLDT said it would let the dust settle on its failed acquisition plan.

"What is clear is that we are seeing a resurgence of the fixed-line business with all these new fixed-line based technologies," said the chair of PLDT.

Eventually, he said PLDT would use its strong wireless telephone network to provide similar services to the rural areas. IPTV has limitations in expanding in remote areas, which are more accessible to satellite signal.

IPTV can fulfill the longstanding plan of Pangilinan to go into broadcast media, which he said, was essential in his long-term vision for PLDT to become a fully-integrated telecom company.

Growrich launches campaign

GROWRICH FOOD Manufacturing Inc., maker of virgin coconut oil in capsules, will launch a nationwide television advertisement campaign today.

Growrich said it was expecting the campaign to boost interest of health-conscious consumers in Growrich products.

Its target markets include those who are already aware of the health benefits of virgin coconut oil (VCO) but are still unaware of Growrich's BFAD-approved process of encapsulating VCO.

In the past few months, Growrich said its VCO capsules had received encouraging support from consumers.

The encapsulated VCO made it easier for people to take VCO regularly since many find it difficult to drink VCO liquid.

Growrich's patent application for its product is now with the Department of Trade and Industry's Intellectual Property Office (IPO). Growrich secured its certificate of public registration for the capsulated VCO last February.

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Bangko Sentral sees GIR inching up to $18.3B

Reserves build-up seen to continue despite widening trade gap, higher maturing debts

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS expects its gross international reserves to inch up to $18.3 billion by the end of the year, slightly up from $18.09 billion as of end-November.

Sources from the Monetary Board said the BSP's policy-making body recently approved the sale of some of its gold holdings. Earnings from the gold sale offset foreign debt servicing outflows and helped build up the GIR level.

The projected yearend GIR would still be much higher than the BSP's target of only $17 billion.

The foreign reserves level breached the $18-billion mark for the first time in end-September, with the total build-up reaching an all-time high of $18.59 billion. The reserves later went down slightly due to servicing of maturing debts.

The GIR consists of the BSP's gross foreign currency holdings, gold reserves, special drawing rights from multilateral institutions and foreign investments. It is an indicator of the economy's ability to service the foreign exchange requirements for importation and debt servicing.

The BSP dips into its foreign reserves to intervene in the sport market by supplying supply dollars whenever there is a need to quell speculative attacks against the local currency. A large GIR build-up, thus, provides psychological support for the peso by improving the BSP's war chest for market intervention in case need arises.

Despite a rising trade deficit partly due to the skyrocketing oil import bill, the country's GIR had remained stable due mainly to strong foreign exchange inflows particularly in the form of remittances from overseas Filipino workers and investments from foreign businesses.

As the global economy appeared headed for a slowdown this year, the BSP said the country might not be able to rely solely on export earnings to raise foreign exchange. Instead, the country might have to count more on remittances and investments for GIR build-up.

For 2006, the BSP expects the GIR level to surge to a new high of $18.65 billion despite pressures from maturing debts and widening trade gap.

Given the expected build-up of the GIR next year, the BSP expects its balance of payments (BOP) and current account to remain in a surplus position.

The BOP measures the foreign exchange transactions between the economy and the rest of the world. Its major components are the current account and the capital and financial account.

GSIS should stay out of CTPL business

Part 2

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

IN MY NOV. 21 COLUMN, I GAVE three reasons why the GSIS should not take over the compulsory third party liability (CTPL) insurance business from the private sector.

First, the planned takeover is based on Presidential Decree No. 245 issued in 1973. But, we are no longer under martial law. Today, free enterprise, globalization, and trade liberalization are the games to play. The government should stay out of private business.

Second, the GSIS wants Transportation and Communications Secretary Mendoza to decree that all vehicle owners should buy their CTPL policies exclusively from the GSIS. Mendoza does not have this authority. The CTPL law is in the insurance code. The insurance commissioner is the only one that has the power to implement it.

Third, the GSIS plan encroaches on the vehicle owner's basic right to enter into contracts. Nobody, least of all a government agency, should tell me how to insure my car, and from whom I should buy the policy.

Three strikes make an out, right? GSIS senior vice president Josefina Valera disagrees. She wants me to throw more strikes. Glad to oblige.

Valera says the GSIS plan does not create a monopoly because its "partner, National Reinsurance Corp. of the Philippines, has invited its stockholders to participate by way of reinsurance". Even with this reinsurance arrangement, the GSIS will still be the sole direct supplier of CTPL insurance in the entire country. This will make the GSIS the worst kind of monopoly—the strict monopoly.

What is bad about a strict monopoly? A strict monopoly is tyrannical. If you are not happy with the way your claim is to be settled, there is no alternative insurer you can go to for better service. You may go to court to seek justice, but, at the end of the day, you still have to buy your policy again from the strict monopoly.

The GSIS first wants to take away the CTPL business from the private sector. Then, it wants to give the business back by reinsuring it to the private sector. After playing the villain, the GSIS wants to play the hero.

The GSIS wants to help in collecting taxes. But it is absolutely tax-exempt. If the GSIS collects the taxes due on the CTPL premium, will not the GSIS be violating its charter?

Valera says the GSIS vows to pay claims within 5 to 10 days from the receipt of the adjuster's report. But, from my own personal experience, adjusters do not submit their accident reports until the GSIS tells them to do so. And the instructions to submit the report can come months after the report is ready.

Admittedly, there is a problem that has been festering for years. But the problem is grossly exaggerated. Nevertheless, it has to be solved.

The new insurance commissioner, Evangeline Escobillo, has designed a new plan, which she calls the clearing house. The plan will use the Internet extensively, thereby keeping to a minimum human intervention, the main cause of graft and corruption. The clearing house has the full and enthusiastic backing of the insurance companies, brokers and agents. I will write about it when it becomes operational next month.

In the meantime, instead of trying to help solve the CTPL mess, GSIS should concentrate on solving the huge internal and external problems that have afflicted the system for so long.

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L.A. 6,173 sqm. (Near TOYOTA)
ALABANG-ZAPOTE Road
MIN. BID PRICE: P 114,200,000

MAKATI CITY
TEXT - 0928-6149591

PALM TOWER
St. Paul St., San Antonio, Makati City

RESIDENTIAL CONDO

L.A.	MIN. BID PRICE
63.77 sqm.	P 1,862,084.00
142.02 sqm.	P 3,681,158.40
152.02 sqm.	P 3,940,358.40

COMMERCIAL CONDO.

L.A.	MIN. BID PRICE
16.16 sqm.	P 322,718.40
21 sqm.	P 447,488.00
22.25 sqm.	P 569.600.00

UCPB_MKT008 - COMM'L LOT
L.A. 484 sqm.
L10 B3, Chino Roces Ave.,
KAYAMANAN "A"
MIN. BID PRICE: P 26,455,000.00

UCPB_MKT009 - TOWNHOUSE
L.A. 210.79 sqm.
Makati Prime City Saint Paul St.,
SAN ANTONIO VILLAGE
MIN. BID PRICE: P 4,320,000.00

MANILA
TEXT - 0927-3333733

UCPB_MLA 022 - COMM'L LOT
L.A. 375 sqm.
España Blvd., SAMPALOC
MIN. BID PRICE: P 9,675,000.00

PARAÑAQUE CITY
TEXT - 0920-9222495

UCPB_PRQ025 - IND'L LOT W/ OFFICE
L.A. 1671 sqm. & WAREHOUSE
East Service Road
SAN MARTIN DE PORRES
MIN. BID PRICE: P 33,579,000.00

UCPB_PRQ174 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A.553.45 sqm.
Jose Abad Santos St.,
BAYVIEW VILLAGE
MIN. BID PRICE: P 5,738,400.00

QUEZON CITY
TEXT - 0917-8948690

UCPB_QC040 - OFFICE CONDO
F.A. 62.90 sqm.
Unit C-7/GF, Unit C-7, Adelina II Condo.,
CUBAO
MIN. BID PRICE: P 1,101,600.00

SAN JUAN
TEXT - 0917-5457357

ATLANTA CENTER
Annapolis, Greenhills, San Juan
OFFICE CONDO

L.A.	MIN. BID PRICE
88.82 sqm.	P 2,637,721.70
114.98 sqm.	P 3,290,400.00
150.31 sqm.	P 4,230,900.00

LUZON

BATAAN

UCPB_BTN256 - AGRI LOT
L.A. 269,248 sqm.
Brgy. Balon Anito, MARIVELES
MIN. BID PRICE: P 14,544,000.00

BATANGAS
TEXT - 0917-5443063

MT. MALARAYAT
Lipa City, Batangas

NON FAIRWAY LOTS

L.A.	MIN. BID PRICE
695 sqm.	P 1,689,300.00
758 sqm.	P 1,842,300.00
787 sqm.	P 1,912,500.00

FAIRWAY LOTS

L.A.	MIN. BID PRICE
1,245 sqm.	P 3,112,500.00
1,301 sqm.	P 3,252,500.00
1,387 sqm.	P 3,467,500.00

BULACAN
TEXT - 0927-3333733

UCPB_BLN073 - RICE MILL W/ 3
STRY COMM'L BLDG. 8
L.A. 1,874 sqm. DOORS-2 STRY
COMM'L BLDG.
Brgy. Tuktukan, GUIGUINTO
MIN. BID PRICE: P 27, 920, 000.00

CAGAYAN VALLEY
TEXT - 0919-8203838

UCPB_CYN078 - COMM'L LOT
L.A. 3,511 sqm.
Lot 2437, Brgy. Ugac Sur,
TUGUEGARAO CITY
MIN. BID PRICE: P 24,448,500.00

CAVITE
TEXT - 0918-9048230

TOWN & COUNTRY
Dasmariñas, Cavite
VACANT RSD'L. LOT

L.A.	MIN. BID PRICE
170 sqm.	P 338,800.00
195 sqm.	P 421,200.00
200 sqm.	P 432,000.00

UCPB_CVT087 - CONDOMINIUM
F.A. 182.88 sqm.
Southwoods Villa, CARMONA
MIN. BID PRICE: P 3,818,700.00

UCPB_CVT096 - COMML LOT
L.A. 3,324 sqm.
Macaria Buss. Center, Brgy.
Poblacion, CARMONA
MIN. BID PRICE: P 21,539,700.00

UCPB_CVT097 - COMM'L LOT
L.A. 4,999 sqm.
Macaria Buss. Center, Brgy.
Poblacion, CARMONA
MIN. BID PRICE: P 32,393,700.00

ISABELA
TEXT - 0919-8203838

UCPB_ISA105 - PIGGERY
L.A. 32,357 sqm.
Bo. Del Pilar, ALICIA
MIN. BID PRICE: P 18,867,000.00

LAGUNA
TEXT - 0919-5801558

PALACIO REAL SUBD.
Calamba, Laguna
VACANT RSD'L. LOT

L.A.	MIN. BID PRICE
279 sqm.	P 477,000.00
284 sqm.	P 486,00.00
334 sqm.	P 571,500.00

UCPB_LGN113 - COMM'L LOT
L.A. 2,078 sqm.
RICHWOOD PARK VILLAGE, San Pablo
MIN. BID PRICE: P 11,530,000.00

NAGA CITY
TEXT - 0921-6422464

UCPB_ NC127 - COMM'L LOT
L.A. 5,000 sqm.
Lot 3-B-4-C, Brgy. Triangulo,
MIN. BID PRICE: P 18,000,000.00

PAMPANGA

UCPB_ PAM257 - AGRO INDST'L LOT
L.A. 72,152 sqm.
Brgy. Sulipan, Apalit
MIN. BID PRICE: P 9,409,500.00

UCPB_ PAM258 - VACANT LOT
L.A. 28,676 sqm.
Bo. Mabiga, Mabalacat
MIN. BID PRICE: P 4,810,000.00

QUEZON PROVINCE
TEXT - 0920-9222495

UCPB_QP152 - 15 DOOR APARTMENT
L.A. 11,468 sqm.
Purok Matahimik, Cotta, LUCENA CITY
MIN. BID PRICE: P 3,475,000

UCPB_QP159 - COMM'L LOT
L.A. 17,129 sqm.
Brgy. Isabang, TAYABAS
MIN. BID PRICE: P 10,404,000.00

UCP_QP247 - COMM'L LOT
L.A. 5,074 sqm.
Quezon Ave., LUCENA CITY
Min. Bid Price: P 22,500,000.00

TAGAYTAY
TEXT - 0917-5443063

UCPB_TGY169 - VACANT LOT
L.A. 11,572 sqm.
Brgy. Maharlika East, TAGAYTAY CITY
Min. Bid Price: P 15,120,000.00

VISAYAS

BACOLOD
TEXT - 0921-4488869

UCPB_ BAC208 1STRY RSD'L BLDG
L.A. 780sqm.
RHO & PHI St. GREENVILLE SUBD.
Min Bid Price: P 2,160,000.00

CEBU
TEXT - 0926-6256957

UCPB_CBU202 VACANT COMM'L LOT
L.A. 38,755 sqm
TRANSCENTRAL HWAY, Brgy. Busay
Min. Bid Price: P22,400,000

MINDANAO

CAGAYAN DE ORO
TEXT - 0921-7388885

PERLITAS EXECUTIVE HOMES
North Poblacion, Medina,
Misamis Oriental
VACANT RSD'L. LOT

L.A	MIN. BID PRICE
96 sqm.	P 40,800.00
105 sqm.	P 44,625.00
109 sqm.	P 46,325.00

UCPB_MO233 - RSD'L LOT
L.A. 729 sqm.
Lot7 Blk 23, XAVIER ESTATES, CDO
MIN. BID PRICE: P 2,924,000.00

UCPB_CDO256 VACANT RSD'L LOT
L.A. 32,323 sqm.
Bo. Macasandig
MIN. BID PRICE: P8,899,500.00

COTABATO
TEXT - 0919-2653012

UCPB_CBT204 - COMM'L LOT
L.A. 460 sqm.
Quezon Ave., POBLACION
MIN. BID PRICE: P 3,910,000.00

UCPB_CBT206 - COMM'L LOT
L.A. 2,700 sqm.
Gutierez Avenue
MIN. BID PRICE: P 15,370,000.00

UCPB_CBT208 - 4 UNITS COMM'L
BLDG. W/ FIRE BRIGADE SHED
L.A. 1,794 sqm.
JOSE LIM SR. ST.
MIN. BID PRICE: P 14,751,000.00

UCPB_CBT210 - 1 UNIT COMM'L. BLDG.
L.A. 860 sqm.
DOÑA LUTGARDA BLANCO ST.
MIN. BID PRICE: P 5,760,000.00

DAVAO
TEXT - 09184005360

CABANTIAN COUNTRY HOMES
Brgy. Cabantian, Buhangin Distric
VACANT RSD'L. LOT

L.A	MIN. BID PRICE
97.58 sqm.	P 52,162.27
101 sqm.	P 53,990.46
109 sqm.	P 58,266.93

TIERRA SOLARIEGA
Puan, Talomo Dist.
VACANT RSD'L. LOT

L.A	MIN. BID PRICE
124 sqm.	P 494,750.00
185 sqm.	P 471,750.00
405 sqm.	P 1,032,750.00

UCPB_ DAV222 - AGRL LOT
L.A. 88,762 sqm.
Talomo Dist., DAVAO CITY
MIN. BID PRICE: P 75,600,000.00

UCPB_ DAV227 - IND'L LOT W/
WAREHOUSE
L.A. 85,086 sqm. (Along Nat'l Hi-way)
BRGY. BUNAWAN
MIN. BID PRICE: P 43,400,000.00

UCPB_DAV250 AGRI LOT
L.A. 12,232 sqm.
Brgy. Communal, Buhangin Dist.
Min. Bid Price: P 2,476,754.15

UCPB_DAV251 AGRI LOT
L.A. 12,227 sqm.
Brgy. Communal, Buhangin Dist.
Min. Bid Price: P 2,475,742.64

UCPB_DAV252 AGRI LOT
L.A. 20,000 sqm.
Brgy. Communal, Buhangin Dist.
Min. Bid Price: P 4,050,035.69

UCPB_DAV253 AGRI LOT
L.A. 87,862 sqm.
Brgy. Communal, Buhangin Dist.
Min. Bid Price: P 30,843,800.00

UCPB_DAV254 AGRI LOT
L.A. 2,000 sqm.
Brgy. Communal, Buhangin Dist.
Min. Bid Price: P 432,004.89.00

UCPB_DAV255 AGRI LOT
L.A. 12,232 sqm.
Brgy. Communal, Buhangin Dist.
Min. Bid Price: P 5,921,397.70

LANAO DEL NORTE
TEXT - 0919-2653012

UCPB_LDN229 -2-STRY IND'L BLDG.
L.A. 20,467 sqm.
Brgy. Tipanoy, ILIGAN CITY
MIN. BID PRICE: P 15,277,500.00

MISAMIS ORIENTAL
TEXT - 0921-7388885

UCPB_ MO239 - RSD'L / RAW LAND
L.A. 1,015,725 sqm.
Sitio Tulahon, Bo. Malanang, OPOL
MIN. BID PRICE; P 77,157,000.00

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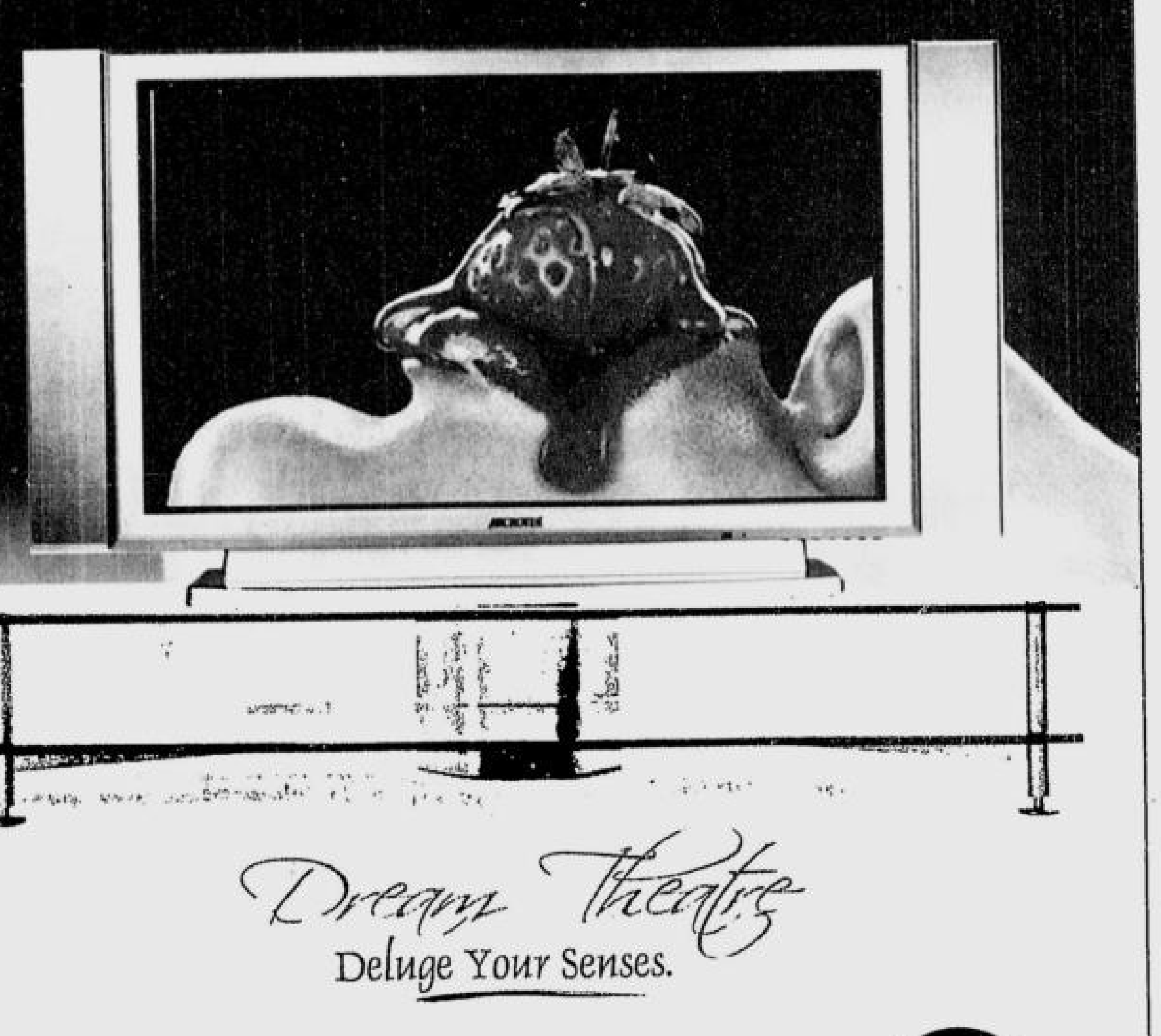
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GMA profits drop in fourth quarter

By Clarissa S. Batino

GMA NETWORK INC., THE COUNTRY'S most profitable broadcast outfit, is suffering from a dramatic drop in earnings in the fourth quarter and will likely post its lowest quarterly profit this year on the back of an industry-wide decline in advertising revenue, its top official said.

GMA 7 president Felipe Gozon said the network could not hope to exceed its profit outlook of P2 billion, although he assured that the target would be met despite the weak fourth quarter.

"The sustained growth in sales and corresponding jump in profits in the fourth quarter that we were expecting didn't happen," Gozon said in an interview. "But I believe this is happening to the entire industry, and not unique to us."

Advertisers, he said, appeared to have front-loaded their budget for the broadcast media. Thus, GMA 7 sales and profits for the first three quarters were robust.

Gozon last month said that profits from January to September stood at about P1.74 billion or 58 percent higher than the P1.09 billion posted in the same period last year. This meant that the network was only P260 million shy of its P2 billion target.

Meeting—not surpassing—the target meant that GMA-7 would book less than half of the profits it had been generating for each quarter this year. In the third quarter alone, it posted net earnings of more than P700 million against the P600 million in the second quarter, and about P400 million in the first three months.

Some advertisers, according to the GMA 7 chief, have already spent all their budgets at the start of the fourth quarter.

The network had not completed its budget for 2006. Gozon assured that growth would be stronger next year compared to this year. Net income would likely grow by 33 percent this year against P1.5 billion in 2004.

Gozon said it was harder to pin down the numbers for next year because GMA 7 still had to factor in the potential contributions of its two new ventures—the international channel and its programming for Channel 11 or QTV.

The network's growing profitability puts it in a stronger position to conduct an initial public offering in the first quarter of 2006. The plan is to sell 25 to 30 percent of the company and raise about P9 billion.

Deutsche Bank and ATR Kim Eng are conducting a due diligence of the company to determine the correct market value of GMA 7.

Gozon believed the new audit will place the company's value at more than P30 billion, which was the previous valuation.

GMA has an average of 5 percent overall rating lead on ABS-CBN in Mega Manila, where a rating point is equivalent to 35,862 households or more than 168,000 viewers.

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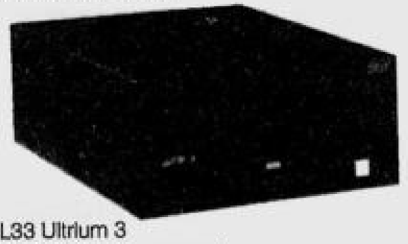

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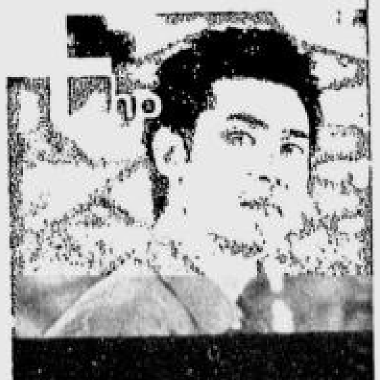

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3G upgrade poised for wireless broadband

By Leo Magno

WHILE THE PHILIPPINES PLODS ALONG IN the implementation of 3G, networks in other countries are already being upgraded even before 3G becomes widely available worldwide. This technology is being presented as a wireless broadband solution not only for cellular phones but also for laptops, personal digital assistants (PDA) and other mobile devices.

Called high-speed downlink packet access (HSDPA), the 3G upgrade is the latest addition to the alphabet soup of acronyms that describe wireless broadband delivery. HSDPA, however, is being positioned not just as a broadband cellular phone service but as a ubiquitous wireless bearer for other applications such as mobile TV and wireless Internet connection for mobile computers.

At a live demo in Cyberjaya in Malaysia's Selangor region, officials from telecommunications network infrastructure provider Ericsson showed how wireless broadband works. Computer terminals inside a van roaming around the Ericsson office displayed live, concurrent video and audio streams as well as actual web browsing while 10-megabyte files were being uploaded and downloaded over the air. This opens up possibilities not just for cellular applications but for packet-based mobile broadband transmissions as well.

Ericsson today has HSDPA in operation 15 countries in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe and North America. It is not meant as a replacement to 3G; Ericsson calls it the evolution of 3G.

"All it takes is uploading the software to the existing WCDMA network," said Andrei Dulski, marketing manager for radio network at Ericsson. "The operators already have what they need, using the same (3G) infrastructure."

HSDPA is thus being positioned as an alternative to wired broadband such as cable or DSL, and at the same time can be used to power 3G cellular networks for mobile phones. Notebook users can do this by inserting HSDPA-compatible PC cards, while computers at homes or offices can use 3G modems for wireless broadband using HSDPA. On the small device side, 3G phones and PDAs can be used.

Ericsson added that HSDPA is a better alternative to WiMax (worldwide interoperability for microwave access) because it is much more mobile, although WiMax promises more wireless bandwidth at 70Mbps.

An Ericsson HSDPA network is now in commercial operation in South Africa. The company has also upgraded Cingular Wireless' UMTS network in Dallas, and upgrades are also being done for Vodafone in Tokyo, Maxis in Malaysia, Cellcom in Israel and Finnet in Finland.

Yet this is only the first phase of the 3G upgrade. HSDPA Phase 1 offers speeds of 3.6Mbps on the downlink. In real-world terms, this translates to downloading a 1Mb or one-minute MP3 file in 4 seconds. This is almost 9 times faster than using a 384kbps copper-based and "wired" DSL connection. Phase 2, scheduled for 2006, offers speeds of almost four times at 14Mbps on the downlink.

Positioning HSDPA as a wireless broadband alternative to cable, DSL and even WiMax shows how the computing and cellular spaces are converging. Ericsson says the demand for broadband is growing, and HSDPA is more mobile than WiMax and has none of the problems encountered when using wired connections.

"It's like copper over the air," said Dulski.

However, during the actual use of notebooks with a 3G PC card at the Ericsson office in Cyberjaya, participants experienced dropped connections to the Maxis network.

Yet positioning a wireless alternative to broadband connection is a wise move as broadband subscriber growth and notebook sales continue to rise. International Data Corp. projects that broadband user accounts will increase to 800,000 in the Philippines by 2008. By then, IDC projects that there would be 1.5 million broadband user accounts in Malaysia, 1.1 million in Thailand, 1 million in Singapore and 300,000 in Indonesia. As the burgeoning demand for broadband looms, the existing "wired" copper networks for DSL will increasingly be congested, and operators are slowing down on the rollout of new copper lines. They are, instead, investing in wireless infrastructure.

As wireless broadband speeds continue to rise, Ericsson believes mobile TV would also be a new revenue stream for operators. Torbjorn Jonsson, solution director for Ericsson Malaysia, said this was a natural progression because mobile TV would merely build on the existing behavior of consumers who are already part of the TV generation.

"Mobile TV subscription and advertising revenues are expected to dominate the revenue stream," said Jonsson. "Then comes interactivity or a combination of both."

However, while Ericsson wants mobile TV to ride on the HSDPA network, its rival Nokia is pushing the use of DVB-H (digital video broadcast-handheld), a different standard that is totally separate from the cellular network. DVB-H delivers mobile TV via another antenna on the mobile device separate from the cellular receiver. This theoretically allows the operator to offer mobile TV services even without an existing 3G infrastructure. Nokia adds that DVB-H is optimized for long periods of TV viewing by large numbers of simultaneous users with high picture quality and low battery consumption.

Ericsson officials countered that DVB-H is one-way with no interactivity involved; it merely broadcasts the TV signal. With HSDPA, they said, operators can offer a personalized TV experience with unicasting, or to a select group through multicasting or to broadcast the same way DVB-H does.

"The advantage here is you can offer multiple services on an HSDPA network, not just mobile TV," said Jonsson.

The question of system capacity then arises. How many unicasts or multicasts can the HSDPA network take, considering that other services like web browsing, downloading and application hosting in managed services may also be taking place concurrently on the same network?

Whatever the application, consumers will no doubt care less about which acronym in the mobile alphabet soup—WCDMA, UMTS, HSDPA or DVB-H—is being used. It remains to be seen if such fast wireless networks would at the same time be reliable and interoperable with other networks.

Journalists still apprehensive about online education

By Alexander Villafania
Contributor

RELATIVELY HIGHER MATRICULATION FEES and technophobia are among the reasons why online learning is not taking off among journalists in the Philippines. There is also the perception that online learning is not as effective as traditional on-campus learning methods, according to an official from the Ateneo De Manila University's Konrad Adenauer Center for Journalism (CFJ).

CFJ Program Director Chay Florentino-Hofileña said online learning on journalism is a relatively new four-year-old program, and this novelty may be contributing to journalists' lack of interest to apply.

Hofileña also noted that the cost is still prohibitive, at P10,000 per three units in MA in Journalism from CFJ, compared to just half of that amount for the regular course.

"Given their low income, journalists who apply for online learning courses may still be limited to those who could pay and still practice at the same time," she said.

She added that many journalists are not yet familiar with many aspects of using a computer, limiting the interest of journalists to take up online courses.

In some cases, culture still plays a big part in entering online courses. Hofileña described a larger number of applicants to the CFJ from a certain TV station, compared to those from its rival network.

"It may be due to culture but what drives media practitioners to take up online courses in journalism is commitment and the will to learn new things. It's a misconception that online learning isn't as effective as classroom learning," Hofileña said.

She said the CFJ has students who are either fresh graduates eager to learn theoretical journalism practices, or veteran journalists who want to retool their skills.

"Some new college graduates didn't take up journalism but would want to work in this field so they take up online journalism courses. For the older reporters, they want to learn new journalism practices simply because they feel they are getting stale."

Hofileña said online learning has its benefits, one of which is getting more active participation from students who would usually stay quiet during real-world classroom discussions.

"Our teachers persuade students to speak up during chatroom discussions. So far, active participation has been very good."

Likewise, online learning also exposes students to opportunities to discuss with their foreign counterparts. The CFJ courses are open not only to Philippine journalists but also to those from other Asian countries.

Hofileña said students are exposed to journalistic practices in other countries and are given the chance to compare notes and apply what they learn.

"Our main objective is to improve the journalism profession in the Philippines, especially instilling media ethics."

The CFJ recently introduced its first book on Internet-based journalism learning, titled "Best Practices in Journalism Education in the Information Age," which chronicles the experiences of CFJ professors on teaching journalism using purely online methods.

The center has also expanded its curriculum to include a broadcast journalism program and a diploma on radio journalism.

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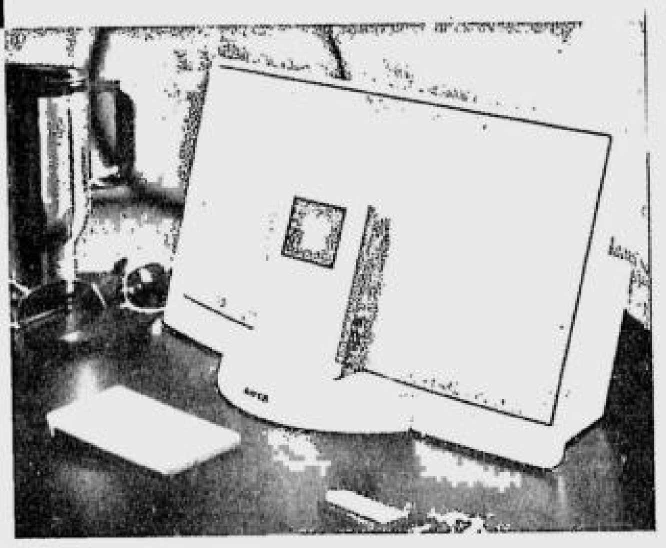

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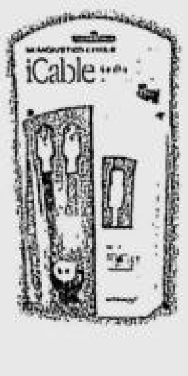

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Government seen to fall short on delivery of crucial reforms

Alarm bells sounded in power generation sector

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

STOCK MARKET ANALYSTS ARE optimistic yet cautious on business prospects for 2006, saying government has still to deliver on crucial reforms to boost the economy.

Luz Lorenzo, economist and vice president of ATR Kim Eng Securities, said that the next challenge facing the government after the passage of the expanded value added tax law would be the implementation of structural reforms, such as the privatization of power generation assets.

"The power sector privatization program has been very much delayed this year," Lorenzo said. "In fact there has been no new sales in power generation assets this year when the goal was that, initially, by December, 70 percent of Luzon and Visayan assets would have been sold. We are a long way from that."

She stressed that privatization is important.

"It affects the government's consolidated budget deficit because of Napocor and, second, it affects the competitiveness of the country," Lorenzo said.

Lorenzo also said the implementation of these reforms would bolster economic growth to 6 percent next year in terms of the gross domestic product from her forecast of 5 percent by the end of 2005.

According to Lorenzo, the growth in agriculture, the services sector and the industrial sector—from mining, manufacturing and utilities—will fuel economic growth.

Astro del Castillo, managing director at First Grade Holdings Inc., said that higher oil prices were still cause for concern as it had breached the $60-a-barrel mark. He said the high prices would affect cost of goods and services.

Wick Veloso, HSBC treasurer and head of global markets, meanwhile said that the VAT's implementation is seen to boost the peso to between P52 and P54 by the first quarter of 2006.

Last Friday, the peso soared to a two-and-a-half year high at 53.42 to the dollar, lifted by strong remittances of Filipino workers overseas.

Non-wage benefits sought for low-income workers

By Ronnel W. Domingo

CONSUMER WELFARE ADVOCATE Raul T. Concepcion urged President Macapagal-Arroyo to grant "non-wage" benefits to minimum, low and middle income workers as a Christmas gift to mitigate the impact of the reformed value-added tax on the prices of goods and services.

Concepcion, who chairs the private-sector Consumer and Oil Price Watch, said he was supporting the recommendation of Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas who sought to address the situation of hard-hit workers.

The COPW chief said low income households should first be granted a P35 subsidy when they buy an 11-kilogram cylinder of liquefied petroleum gas used for cooking.

Second, minimum wage workers (who in Metro Manila earn P275 daily) should be exempted from paying income tax.

Concepcion said Sto. Tomas found this proposal "acceptable" during consultations with officials of the Employers Confederation of the Philippines, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines.

Also, COPW expressed its support for the labor department's proposal for the National Food Authority to redeploy its Rolling Stores to major work centers such as economic zones, factory sites, transportation terminals and other areas suggested by labor organizations.

A fifth proposal was for the provision of shuttle buses or transportation assistance for low-income workers.

Another was for all employers to ensure that workers should have received their 13th month pay by Dec. 24 or as early as Dec. 16.

Finally, Concepcion said the minimum wage should be hiked on or before Feb. 15, when regional tripartite wage and productivity boards would have determined "the erosion of the purchasing power due to the implementation of the new VAT law."

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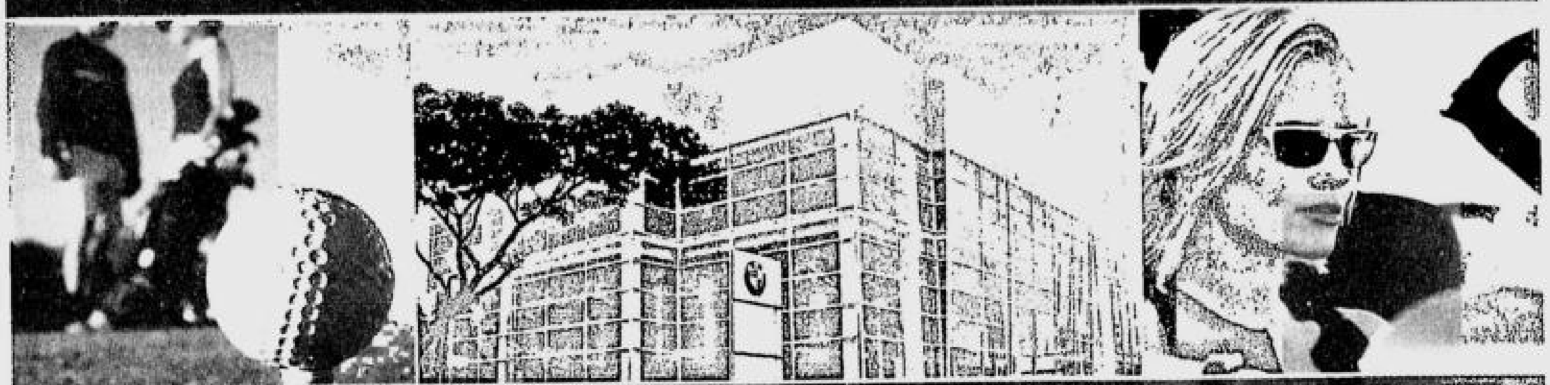

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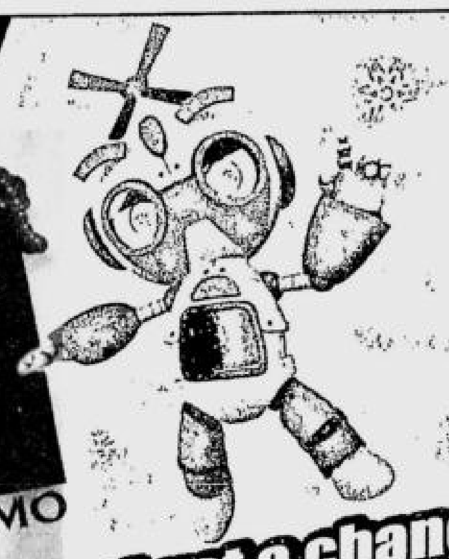

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With its budget slashed, securities commission still eyes growth in '06 income

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE SECURITIES AND EXchange Commission will work with a tighter budget next year even as it strives to promote investor education and improve its surveillance systems, according to SEC chair Fe Barin.

She said that the SEC had proposed a higher budget at P377 million to boost its efforts toward developing the capital markets.

But the commission was given a budget of P241 million this year.

"We hope that if the financial condition of the government improves, our (budget) will also improve," Barin said.

But even with the tight budget, the SEC hopes to grow its income next year to P680 million from a projected P640 million this year mainly from registration fees and other corporate processing payments.

The commission has already embarked on a major computerization project, dubbed the i-Report, which would enable market players to quickly access relevant market information.

Monetary Board expected to increase overnight rates

Credit-rating upgrade also seen to be in the pipeline

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS' MONetary board is likely to hike its overnight rates by 25 basis points during its policy-rate setting this Thursday, said an economist of British bank Standard Chartered.

"Inflation will be a key focus for the BSP, and we expect another 75 basis points in policy rate hike over the next six months, starting with a 25 basis point hike at the 15th December meeting," said SCB's Mike Moran in a Dec. 8 commentary. "BSP tightening should help to stabilize narrowing yield differentials set in motion by the improving fiscal outlook, providing additional support to the peso as the US Fed (Federal Reserve) continues to tighten."

The BSP has jacked up its key overnight rates by 75 basis points so far this year, on top of a 2-percentage hike in the reserve requirement, citing the need to curb inflationary pressures arising from soaring oil prices and rapid growth of liquidity in the financial system.

The last increase was approved during the monthly policy-rate setting in October, bringing the rates to their highest levels since 2002.

Another 25-basis-point rate hike from the US Fed Open Market Committee this week is likewise a "done deal," said American Express Bank in a separate commentary.

"But the key issue is whether the FOMC will change the accompanying statement," Amex said. "The words 'accommodative' or 'measured pace' could be dropped, but any significant change in terminology could backfire by cutting bond yields.

"We now expect the Fed funds rate to rise to 4.75 percent before the Fed goes on prolonged hold."

Meanwhile, Moran said there was reason to be optimistic on the Philippines in the coming year. Given an improving fiscal backdrop, he said a credit rating upgrade should be in the pipeline over the next six to nine months.

He said the visit by credit rating firm Moody's last week, for instance, would likely result in a more positive assessment than the last.

"With the expanded value added tax in place and the additional 2-percent hike in VAT rates expected, government finances should improve markedly," Moran said.

He said the budget deficit had continued to benefit from fiscal measures implemented this year, likely resulting in a narrowing of the shortfall to below 3 percent of gross domestic product in 2005 and below 2 percent in 2006, the lowest since 1998.

Better scheme to manage gov't debts, risks

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE HAS INItiated steps to tighten the borrowings of state-owned companies, in line with the Arroyo administration's effort to reduce the government's bloated contingent debts.

"We are coming up with a more effective debt and risk management system," said Finance Undersecretary Roberto Tan, adding that the DOF had just finished a review of all the government's contingent debts in the power sector.

He said that the next step would be to establish policies that would prevent the debts from increasing.

Contingent liabilities are the borrowings of government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs) and government financial institutions (GFIs) that carry a sovereign guarantee.

Default in payment would mean that the national government would have to service the GOCC debts on top of its own liabilities.

As of end August, the government's own outstanding debt had reached P3.9 trillion. The debts were the result of borrowings undertaken to fill budget deficits in the past.

A recent report by the Commission on Audit criticized the DOF and the Bureau of Treasury for allegedly failing to monitor all of the government's contingent debts, such as those coming from the build-operate-transfer projects. Consequently, there is the possibility that the amount of all contingent debts is something the government could not afford to pay if the borrowing firms default on payments.

The COA noted that the government's contingent liabilities officially stood at P606.7 billion as of August, but the actual figure could be bigger. The COA said the DOF has so far only identified 18 BOT projects, costing P308.85 billion, that are at risk of being shouldered by the government.

Also, there are other BOT projects in which the government's contingent liabilities have not yet been identified.

As of September this year, there are 71 BOT projects underway. BOT projects are covered by a sovereign guarantee to make them attractive to investors and, thus, promote the development of infrastructure.

But Tan said that the DOF now has a strong grasp of the government's contingent debts, and has been very careful in approving the loans of GOCCs and GFIs.

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Valley Golf	200,000	180,000
Wack-Wack Golf Club	6,350,000	6,000,000

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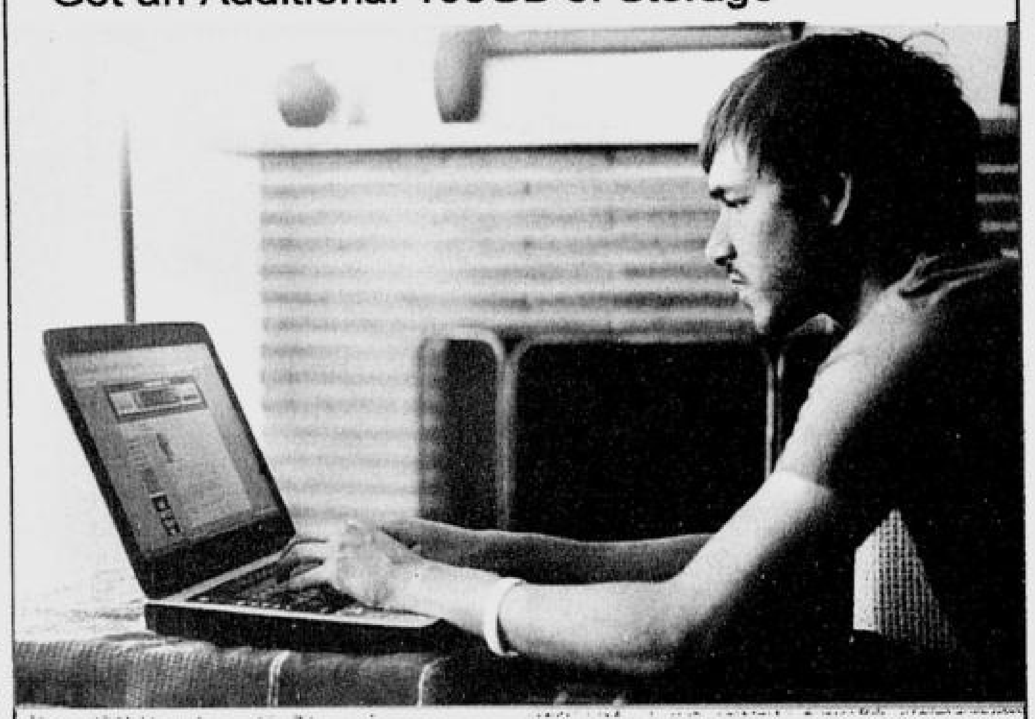
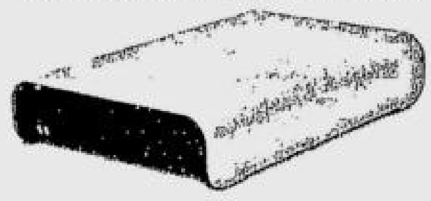
(As of Dec. 9, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	33	33	32.5	32.5	433,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	58	58.5	57.5	57.5	182,000
China Banking Corp.	605	605	605	605	940
Citystate Savings Bank	17.5	17.75	17.5	17.75	2,200
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61	1,440,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	55	56	55	56	59,000
International Exch. Bank	21.5	21.5	21.5	21.5	44,800
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	33	33.5	33	33.5	329,100
Philippine National Bank	32	33	32	32.5	54,600
Security Bank Corp.	32.5	33	32.5	33	100,400
Union Bank of the Phil.	30.5	31	30.5	31	4,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Manulife Financial Corp.	3160	3160	3160	3160	100
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2110	2110	2110	2110	540
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	13.75	13.75	13.75	13.75	4,800
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.9	0.91	0.9	0.91	60,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	745	745	740	740	21,330
ISM Communications Corp.	0.048	0.048	0.047	0.048	1,100,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.6	3.6	3.45	3.45	2,491,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1780	1780	1770	1775	141,620
Philweb Corp.	0.016	0.016	0.015	0.016	53,900,000
POWER, ENERGY & OTHER UTILITIES					
Manila Electric Co. A	15.5	16	15.5	16	25,100
Manila Electric Co. B	24.25	24.75	24	24.75	855,800
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.5	6.5	6.4	6.4	130,000
Petron Corp.	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.55	1,966,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	10,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.8	1.82	1.8	1.82	110,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	9.7	9.7	9.6	9.6	55,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	100,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.7	0.7	1,570,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	0.82	0.83	0.82	0.83	50,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	3.85	3.85	3.8	3.85	1,102,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.45	3.45	3.45	3.45	15,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23	23	22	22.5	337,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	43	44	43	44	493,000
Pancake House Inc.	3.65	3.65	3.6	3.6	202,000
RFM Corp.	0.72	0.72	0.71	0.71	290,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	100,000
San Miguel Corp. A	64	64	63.5	64	114,800
San Miguel Corp. B	87	87	85.5	85.5	50,800
Universal Robina Corp.	18.5	18.5	18.5	18.5	2,500
Vitarich Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	200,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	332.5	335	330	330	923,910
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	150,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.75	4.8	4.75	4.8	606,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	1,000,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.1	2.12	2.1	2.12	1,000,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	23,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.88	0.89	0.87	0.89	710,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	1,000,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.1	1.12	1.1	1.12	2,238,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.89	0.89	0.89	0.89	20,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.19	0.195	0.19	0.195	300,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.32	0.33	0.32	0.33	1,020,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.2	3.2	3.15	3.15	450,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.027	100,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.22	1.22	1.22	1.22	184,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	48	49.5	48	49	940,600
House of Investments Inc.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	132,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.55	2,216,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.58	1.58	1.54	1.56	202,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.28	1.28	1.26	1.26	747,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.33	0.33	17,800,000
Paxys Inc.	6.2	6.2	6.1	6.1	50,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	350,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	200,000
SM Investments Corp.	250	250	249	249	48,390
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.43	0.44	0.43	0.44	200,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	9,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	600,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	1,300,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.28	450,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Interphil Labs Inc. A	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	120,000
Metro Alliance Hldgs B	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	200,000
Macondray Plastics Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	4,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	2,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.77	0.77	0.77	0.77	100,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	3,870,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	109,000
Philippine Racing Club	3	3	3	3	106,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	14	14.25	14	14.25	254,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series O	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	8.6	8.6	8.6	8.6	10,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	9.7	9.9	9.7	9.9	10,067,000
Cityland Development Corp.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	91,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.08	1.1	1.08	1.08	614,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	200,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	2,380,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.36	1.36	1.34	1.34	3,235,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	10,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	30,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	80,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	201,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	200,000
SM Development Corp.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	20,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8	8	7.8	7.8	9,645,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	40,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	0.97	0.97	0.96	0.96	210,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	30,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	6	6	6	6	1,000
Benguet Corp. A	7.5	7.6	7.3	7.3	39,000
Benguet Corp. B	30	30	30	30	1,100
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	50,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.225	0.225	0.215	0.215	1,910,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.25	0.25	0.245	0.245	4,880,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	20,300,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	66,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	33,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.4	1.4	1.36	1.36	1,803,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.76	1.76	1.72	1.72	3,363,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	28.5	28.5	28	28	200,500
OIL					
Interport Res.	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	10,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	35,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	61,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	13,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	410,000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SEC seen junking plan to sue Pacific Plan

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION (SEC) is expected to drop a plan to file criminal raps against pre-need firm Pacific Plans Inc. (PPI), well-informed sources told the INQUIRER.

The sources said this decision—which had split votes from members of the Commission en Banc—was reached during an executive committee meeting on Friday.

A unit of the SEC that investigated PPI's deals said that based on the Securities Regulation Code it could not find fraud with respect to the transfer of PPI's ownership from the Yuchengco group to other companies.

As this developed, sources said the SEC was poised to restore PPI's license if it would be able to secure a court ruling that would exempt fixed value plan holders from a stay order that suspended payments on education plans.

The move to activate PPI's license is consistent with the SEC's position that PPI is a solvent company and is, therefore, capable of paying plan holder benefits.

The SEC earlier said in its comments to the Makati Regional Trial Court that PPI was healthy contrary to its claims that its resources was strained, especially if it would absorb assets of its subsidiary, Lifetime Plans Inc.

The SEC argued that the consolidated audited financial statement submitted by PPI "does not truthfully state" its financial condition and that of Liftime, its fixed value plans unit.

The regulator claimed that the 2004 audited financial statement of PPI "reflected a rosy financial position of the company." Consolidated with Lifetime, however, PPI allegedly tried to present an illiquid corporation "to mislead the court, the government and the public."

The SEC had said that PPI's trust fund for fixed value education plans , pension and memorial plans—which were transferred to Lifetime—was P9.38 billion, much more than its actuarial reserve liabilities of P8.95 billion.

CURRENCIES

December 9, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.846024	1.000000	53.7690
Japan	Yen	0.007032	0.008312	0.4469
United Kingdom	Pound	1.483418	1.753400	94.2786
Hongkong	Dollar	0.109111	0.128969	6.9345
Switzerland	Franc	0.650887	0.769349	41.3671
Canada	Dollar	0.730464	0.863409	46.4246
Singapore	Dollar	0.502628	0.594106	31.9445
Australia	Dollar	0.635201	0.750807	40.3701
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.244273	2.652731	142.6347
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.225607	0.266667	14.3384
Brunei	Dollar	0.501140	0.592347	31.8499
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000086	0.000102	0.0055
Thailand	Baht	0.020514	0.024248	1.3038
UAE	Dirham	0.230349	0.272272	14.6398
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.182000	63.5550
Argentina	Peso	0.282951	0.334448	17.9829
Brazil	Real	0.382816	0.452489	24.3299
Denmark	Kroner	0.134277	0.158715	8.5339
India	Rupee	0.018320	0.021654	1.1643
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.224350	0.265182	14.2586
Mexico	New Peso	0.080317	0.094935	5.1046
New Zealand	Dollar	0.593243	0.701213	37.7035
South Africa	Rand	0.133865	0.158228	8.5078
Korea	Won	0.000818	0.000967	0.0520
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025285	0.029887	1.6070

PDEx GS BENCHMARKS

Philippine Dealing & Exchange Corp. (PDEx)
Friday, Dec. 9, 2005, (as of 4:30 p.m.)

Tenor	Today	Change from previous day	Change from previous week	Change from previous month
1M	6.2500	0.20	0.50	0.00
3M	6.3000	0.25	0.43	(0.08)
6M	7.6000	0.00	0.10	(0.53)
1Y	8.5000	0.00	0.51	(0.63)
2Y	9.3500	0.03	0.28	(0.35)
3Y	9.6000	0.00	0.28	(0.50)
4Y	9.7250	0.00	0.23	(0.73)
5Y	9.9250	0.00	0.72	(0.65)
7Y	10.2250	0.00	0.13	(0.78)
10Y	10.7500	0.00	0.00	(1.00)
20Y	11.6250	0.00	0.25	(0.50)
25Y	11.8750	0.03	0.03	(0.63)

PDEx TRADING VOLUME

Instrument	Weekly Total Volume (in million PHP)
FXTNs	3,400.8
TBILLs	474.0
RTBs	360.0
TOTAL	4,234.8

NOTE: PDEx Benchmarks are calculated from the weighted average yields of done transactions, best midrates, or best firm bid rates as the case maybe for 12 tenors at 4 p.m. daily. The PDEx Benchmarks may be used to compare interest rate bases for loans, deposits and other financial instruments that have variable rates.

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"With the help of my wife, Constancia, and my sons Danilo and Renato, we put up Natomo Light Metal Craft in 1994 – an entrepreneurial venture that manufactures and sells portable palay threshers, rotary weeders and 'superkalan.'

"Little did we know that we will, eventually, help improve farm productivity in the area - particularly in Regions 1 and 2 - by making affordable mechanized farm equipment which speeds up post-harvest activities and minimizes wastage.

"But what's more important are the employment opportunities we were able to give to our townmates. To date, Natomo might have employed more than a hundred skilled and semi-skilled workers; either as regular or contractual employees.

"Looking back, I would say we owe much of our success to the people who work for us; whom we treated as our partners.

"The same is true with DBP, our partner since 2000. DBP helped us finance our growth by giving us the opportunity to avail of loan programs for small- and medium-scale industries.

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- Narciso Mosuela, Sr.
Inventor and Entrepreneur
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Gov't OKs tax perks for Iglo

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE BOARD OF INVESTMENTS FINALLY APPROVED the tax perks for the Concepcion-controlled Iglo Philippines Inc.'s latest plant in its cold-storage complex in Pasig City.

Iglo Philippines inaugurated its P130-million cold-storage plant at the Manggahan Light Industrial Park last October.

Trade Undersecretary Elmer C. Hernandez, who is also the BOI's managing head, said the agency previously disapproved incentives for the project because it did not meet the requirement that at least 60-percent of the firm's voting shares and seats in the board of directors represented Filipino interests.

Hernandez said the company had submitted documents showing that it was now a 60-40 partnership between the Concepcion family and Malaysia's Iglo (Integrated Global Low-Temperature Operations) International Ltd.

"The (2005) Investment Priorities Plan includes cold-storage facilities, but there is this requirement on ownership particularly for domestic-oriented projects that seek non-pioneer status," he explained.

Such status entitled the facility to a four-year tax holiday and other fiscal and non-fiscal perks.

"A project proponent must show that at all times, foreigners do not control more than 40 percent of a domestic-oriented business," he added.

The IPP mainly encourages projects that are export-oriented and thus contribute to the country's foreign exchange reserves.

Last October, Iglo Philippines chair Jose Concepcion III said the company was committed to quality service for its customers that were engaged in food manufacturing and processing; fruits and vegetables fresh produce; trading of meat and poultry; and supply chain management to retail and fast food outlets.

Iglo's Terminal 3, like the two older terminals, can accommodate as many as 3,000 pallets for chilled and frozen produce.

Iglo treasurer Ramon M. Lopez said the latest investment brought Iglo's total Philippine investments to P350 million.

OFW dollars fail to spur Philippine economy

Government 'pump-priming' expected to take up slack

By Daxim L. Lucas

IN HIS LONG YEARS AS A GOVERNMENT economist, Economic Planning Secretary Augusto B. Santos said the dollars sent home by expatriate Filipinos have never played such a significant role in the economy as they do now.

Indeed, while the growth rate of local economic output slowed to 4.1 percent in the third quarter of 2005, the entire economy—including remittances from overseas Filipino workers—grew by a staggering 6.5 percent in that same period.

"This is the biggest gap [between gross domestic and gross national products] I've seen in recent economic history," Santos said in an interview. "I can't remember it being this wide before."

The latest economic numbers has Santos worried.

He pointed out that the local economy has two faces—and they couldn't be more different from each other.

One aspect is the financial sector, which has been giving off encouraging signals in recent weeks, with the strengthening of the peso against the dollar and declining interest rates since the passage of the value-added tax law. The other aspect, however, is more ominous, showing a sharp deceleration in the real economy's growth rate.

While the peso has strengthened to above the 54:$1 level and the 91-day treasury bill rate continues to decline, official GDP numbers released last week disappointed many economists and analysts. Many of them were counting on the government's predictions of third-quarter growth to exceed 5 percent.

Obviously, the danger is that gains in the financial sector may delude the policymakers and the broader public into believing that all is well with the Philippine economy.

Unproductive OFW money

According to Santos, dollars remitted by overseas Filipino workers have simply caught government planners by surprise, including economists at the central bank.

"There is simply a lot of money going around," he said.

The money sent home by more than five million Filipinos living and working abroad—in excess of $10 billion expected this year—has traditionally been credited for keeping the local economy afloat.

According to Santos, however, the latest GDP numbers showed that OFW dollars have not exactly been used to lubricate the wheels of the economy.

"All indications point to the fact that these funds are not being spent by the OFWs' families," he said. "Instead, they are just saving it in banks."

With the country often being criticized for having one of the lowest savings rates in the region, one would think that a sudden desire to save is a good thing.

WORKERS stationed abroad form a queue upon their arrival at the international airport. The money that these workers send to their families here are being kept in banks—not spent, as some government officials have hoped.

Not so, said Santos.

"They have to spend this money to help the economy move," the Neda chief pointed out. "The fact that they're saving their money doesn't help in expanding the Philippine economy."

Policymakers are at a loss over how to explain Filipinos' sudden desire to save, when they even had to encourage people—especially relatives of OFWs—to be more conscientious about their spending patterns only a few years ago.

But economist Cayetano Paderanga Jr. thinks he knows why Filipinos have become gun-shy all of a sudden when it comes to spending.

"All the polls tend to show that there isn't enough confidence [to spend]," he said, citing the behavior of both large firms as well as individual consumers. "Everybody's scared to spend."

Data from the National Statistics Coordination Board showed that the value of the country's local economic output (GDP) hit P1.32 trillion in the third quarter of this year.

When one includes income from abroad, the GNP swelled to P1.44 trillion, a difference of P119 billion—the largest in history—composed mainly of dollars sent home by expatriate Filipinos.

This amount, known as the "net factor income from abroad." has practically doubled from levels seen as recently as the first quarter of 2003.

Paderanga, who helped steer the economy as President Aquino's Neda chief, said that these dollar inflows have helped stabilize or even strengthen the financial sector, but has hardly helped anything else.

"The rest [of the economy] is not moving," he said. "The supply side of the economy is simply not responding to the liquidity that is available."

Return to 'pump-priming'

Neda's Santos thinks the problem lies in the fact that there are not enough investment opportunities available to OFWs and their relatives.

The challenge, he said, was for the government to create vehicles for investments that would attract OFW money into "more productive uses."

He said Filipinos must learn to become more entrepreneurial and put up businesses that would create jobs and further generate consumption, rather than just be content living off dollars sent home by their relatives.

To do this, however, he believed that government must put its money where its mouth is.

"Consumer confidence is low," he said, comparing the local situation to that of Japan in the mid-1990s where low confidence made the economy shrink despite it being one of the world's wealthiest nations. "There's fear and hesitation."

According to Santos, economic managers met recently to discuss this phenomenon and plan ways that would allow the country to sidestep the economic stagnation trap.

The solution?

"The government will pump-prime the economy, so people will also start spending," he said.

Pump-priming is the method by which the state jump-starts a sluggish economy by initiating a chain of spending that will help create more jobs, greater consumer demand, and eventually higher growth rates. Pump-priming has largely fallen into disrepute in the local context after the Estrada administration tried—and failed—to revive an ailing economy through profligate spending, resulting in deeper fiscal crisis.

Unlike the late 1990s, however, Santos believed that another round of pump-priming was justified given that state finances were in better shape with the recent passage of the VAT law.

In addition, Santos felt that the government "overdid" its austerity measures, with many agencies failing to spend for even their programmed activities this year.

"*Sumombra naman tayo sa tipid* (we were saving too much)," he said.

The Neda chief said that government spending next year—with an additional P200 billion allocated for infrastructure—would create a positive "contagion" effect, and prompt more people to spend or invest, rather than just save, their money.

Dangers remain

Many observers, however, remain cautious about the government's plans.

According to University of the Philippine professor Dante Canlas, a sustained recovery depended a lot on the credibility of the Arroyo administration's fiscal program.

Canlas, who served as Neda chief during President Macapagal-Arroyo's first term, said planners must take care not to squander economic gains by neglecting "hidden" expenses like subsidies to bleeding state agencies.

He was also worried that perceived gains on the financial sector would erode the government's desire for fiscal reform.

"There are some disturbing signs," he said. "Some mitigating measures will dissipate the positive factors."

He also pointed out that there remains up to $8 billion worth of stranded costs for National Power Corp., along with other state subsidies, which might set back the fiscal program further.

The government is hoping that early gains in the financial sector would spill over into the real sector in the form of higher confidence. But failure to address this would likely erase gains in the financial sector and reinforce the weakness in the real sector of the economy, Canlas warned.

"Positive sentiment depends very much on whether we can have sustainability on the fiscal side," he said. "The market is watching."

Without sustained reforms, Santos, Paderanga, and Canlas—current and former Neda chiefs—agree that financial sector gains will remain illusory and elusive for most Filipinos.

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MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

Republika ng Pilipinas
Republic of the Philippines
Kagawaran ng Tanggulang Pambansa
Department of National Defense

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

(Bidding for the Phase 1 Upgrade of Two (2) Britten Norman Islander-2A Fixed Wing Aircraft of the Philippine Navy)

1. The Department of National Defense (Armed Forces of the Philippines), through the General Appropriation Act and the AFP Modernization Program Act Trust Fund, intends to apply the sum of ***SEVENTY TWO MILLION PESOS (PHP 72,000,000.00)*** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the **Phase 1 Upgrade Project of Two (2) Britten Norman Islander-2A Fixed Wing Aircraft (BNI-2A)** of the Philippine Navy. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The DND/AFP now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the **PHASE 1 UPGRADE OF TWO (2) BRITTEN NORMAN ISLANDER-2A FIXED WING AIRCRAFT (BNI-2A)** of the Philippine Navy. The expected contract duration is **360 CALENDAR DAYS** as per Bidding Documents. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act", and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the DND Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) Secretariat and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address specified below from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of ***Eight Thousand Pesos (Php 8,000.00)*** **starting on December 9, 2005.** The method of payment will be in cash or thru cashier's check. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. **Bid opening shall be on February 2, 2006 at 9:00 a.m.** Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at *Silid Panday Pira, 1st Floor, Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City.*
7. The DND/AFP will hold a **Pre-bid Conference** open to all interested parties on **December 21, 2005 at 9 a.m.** at the *Silid Panday Pira, 1st Floor, Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City.*
8. **Bids and eligibility requirements must be submitted to the address below on or before - 9:00 a.m. of February 2, 2005.** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in any of the forms and corresponding amount allowed under RA 9184 and its IRR-A. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
9. To facilitate eligibility checking, manufacturers and/or prospective bidders who wish to participate in the public bidding are required to apply for registration with the DND BAC, through the DND BAC Secretariat, at least fifteen (15) days before the scheduled submission and opening of bids for the procurement of the projects they wish to participate in, pursuant to DND BAC Cir 01-2005 (download available at the website specified below) dtd 12 May 2005.
10. The DND/AFP reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

DND BAC Extension Secretariat
Armed Forces of the Philippines
Modernization Program Management Office
3/F Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo
Quezon City, Philippines 1110
Tel. No: (632) 911-6001 local 6592
Telefax No: (632) 912-9541/421-2327
Email: **cmtdmpmo@yahoo.com**
Website: www.info.com.ph/~afpmod

(Sgd.) USEC JOSE F SANTOS
Chairman, DND BAC

(PDI - Dec. 12 & 19, 2005)

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Republic of the Philippines
NPC-MMSD 2005-029

Computer Leasing (Notebook Computer)/ Hauling Services/O&M of NPC Tugboat #1

1. The NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION (NPC), through its approved Corporate Budget of CY 2005 intends to apply the sum of (Please see schedule under item no. 9) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract listed below. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. NPC now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for GOODS listed below. Delivery of the GOODS is required by the date indicated in the bid documents. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive biduing procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from NPC and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm from Monday to Friday. Issuance of Bidding Documents shall start on December 5, 2005 from 8:30 am to 11:30 am Monday to Friday. No Bid Documents shall be issued on the date of bidding.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount listed below. The method of payment will be cash. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. NPC will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on dates listed below at the designated NPC function rooms.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address as listed in the Bid Documents on or before the dates stated below All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form as stated in the Bid Documents. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be on the dates specified hereunder at the designated NPC function rooms. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
9. ITEMS FOR BID

Schedule	Date/Time & Place of Bidding	Item Description	PR No./Inquiry No.	ABC (In Pesos)	Bid Docs Price
I	January 4, 2006 10:00 AM Kañao Room	Hauling Services: Masbate Pier to Sibuyan, Concepcion, Banton, Corcuera, San Jose & Ticao DPP	PB060104-MMMT3994 HO-LOD-05-190	4,965,080.00	P 1,100.00
II		Hauling Services: Manila Pier to Lubang DPP	PB060104-MMMT3995 HO-LOD-05-0191	2,813,500.00	P 1,100.00
III		Hauling Services: Powerzone Depot, Painab, Virac Catanduanes to Mannawa, Viga DPP & PB110	PB060104-MMMT3996 HO-LOD-05-0192	12,029,000.00	P 3,300.00
IV	January 4, 2006 2:00 PM Kañao Room	Computer Leasing (76 units of Notebook Computer) for ISTD, NPC-OBC, Diliman, Q.C.	IST-2005-010	2,340,000.00	P 1,100.00
V		One (1) year Operation & Maintenance (O/M) of NPC Tugboat No. 1 to include labor & materials	7VO-OVO-05-048	6,364,367.04	P 2,200.00

NOTE: A Pre-bidding Conference will be held for the following bidding schedules:

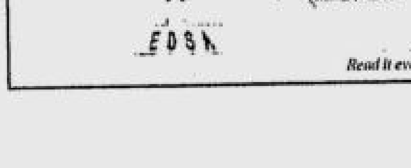
Schedule	Date	Time	Place
Schedule I-V	December 20, 2005	2:00 PM	Old Peñafrancia Room

10. NPC reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
THE BAC, MMSD – SECRETARIAT
Materials Management Department
Materials Management Services Division
Agham Rd. cor. Quezon Ave., Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. No 921-3190, 921-3541 loc. 5599 & 6477
mlrifianes@napocor.gov.ph
Fax No 921-3190
http://www.napocor.gov.ph

(Sgd.) LORENZO S. MARCELO
Chairman, BAC-MMSD

Approved for Publication:
(Sgd.) **J.B. RAMIREZ**
OIC, Materials Management Services Division
(PDI - Dec. 5 & 12, 2005)



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DAVAO CITY WATER DISTRICT
J.P. Laurel Ave., Davao City
Tel. # 221-9400

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The *Davao City Water District*, with the *Approved Budget for 2005* intends to apply the sum of ***One Million Five Hundred Ninety Nine Thousand Nine Hundred Ninety Two Pesos & Forty Five Cents (P1,599,992.45)*** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for ***Various C.I Fittings, G.I Pipes & Fittings***. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The *Davao City Water District* now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for:

Lot/Package No. 1 (Various C.I Fittings): **ABC: Php 1,024,500.00**

a)	130 pcs.	-	Mech'l Sleeve Type Coupling, 63mm
b)	305 pcs.	-	Mech'l Sleeve Type Coupling, 110mm
c)	60 pcs.	-	Mech'l Flange Adaptor, 225mm, (8")
d)	70 pcs.	-	Steel Flange Ring, 200mm, (8")
e)	50 pcs.	-	C.I Saddle Clamp, 4" x 2", for uPVC

Lot/Package No.2 (Various G.I Pipe & Fittings) **ABC: Php 575,492.45**

a)	300 pcs.	-	G.I Pipe, ½"x20', sch. 40
b)	5,000 pcs.	-	G.I nipple, ¾"x6", sch. 40
c)	3,043 pcs.	-	G.I nipple, ½"x12", sch. 40
d)	15 pcs.	-	G.I Union Patent, ½"
e)	3,500 pcs.	-	G.I Plug, ¾"
f)	110 pcs.	-	G.I Bushing, 1"x¾"
g)	50 pcs.	-	G.I Bushing, 2"x¾"
h)	15 pcs.	-	G.I Coupling Reducer, 2"x1"
i)	20 pcs.	-	G.I Coupling Reducer, 2"x¾"
j)	7,000 pcs.	-	G.I Elbow, ½" x 90 degrees
k)	7,000 pcs.	-	G.I Elbow, ¾" x 90 degrees"
l)	7,000 pcs.	-	G.I Straight Elbow, ½" x 90 degrees

Delivery of the GODDS is required by ***FEBRUARY 15, 2006***. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from *Davao City Water District* and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. up to 5:00 p.m.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of non refundable fee in the amount of ***P1,500.00/package***. The method of payment will be on Cash Basis. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The *Davao City Water District* will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on ***JANUARY 4, 2006 at 9:00 o'clock a.m. at DCWD BAC-A Secretariat Office, J.P. Laurel Ave., Bajada, Davao City***
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before ***JANUARY 17, 2006 at 9:00 o'clock a.m.*** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of *cash or Manager's check* and in the amount of ***P10,245.00 for LOT/PACKAGE I*** and ***P5,754.90 for LOT/PACKAGE II***. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be on ***JANUARY 17, 2006 at 9:00 o'clock a.m.*** at ***DCWD BAC-A Secretariat Office, J.P. Laurel Ave., Bajada, Davao City***. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
9. The *Davao City Water District* reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Davao City Water District
BAC-A
J.P. Laurel Ave., Bajada, Davao City
Tel. No. : 221-9400 (8000)
E-mail add : dcwd@davao-water.gov.ph
Fax No. : 224-5392
Website : www.davao-water.gov.ph

(Sgd.) **VIRGINIA S. MARIMON**
BAC-A Chairperson

(PDI - Dec. 12 & 19, 2005)

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID FOR THE SALE OF JUNK ITEMS

DATE OF BIDDING : January 12, 2006, 2:00 p.m., Solarium Hall, Bldg.-1 Grd. Floor, NPC-HO, Agham Road corner Quezon Ave., Diliman, Quezon City.

The National Power Corporation will conduct public bidding of the following scrap and junk items located at various NPC stations.

SCHEDULE - I

Item Description and Location	**Minimum Bid Price**
1. Used transformer oil "PCB" Free, approx. 120,000 liters, located at Bataan Nuclear Plant, Napot Point, Morong, Bataan	P14.00/liter

Note: **Interested parties who wish to secure bid form for the above items must be accredited waste oil processors/treaters and must present valid DENR Permit to Operate and Discharge Permit**

SCHEDULE - II

Item Description and Location	**Minimum Bid Price**
1. One (1) lot, structure for dismantling Fabrication Shop surrounding structures, assorted scrap metals, construction equipment/tools, fabrication machines and other junk items located in the Fabrication shop	P3,324,000.00

Note: **The sale shall include clean up of the perimeters of the fabrication shop and the surrounding structures.**

ALL BIDS MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. **PROPOSAL BOND DEPOSIT IN THE FORM OF CASH OR MANAGER'S/ CASHIER'S CHECK EQUIVALENT TO TEN PERCENT (10%) OF THE TOTAL BID PRICE OFFER.**
2. **LATEST INCOME TAX RETURN (2004) ORIGINAL OR XEROX COPY OF THE BIDDER**
3. **TAX CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE OF THE BIDDER**

INTERESTED PARTY WHO WISH TO SECURE BID FORM MUST PRESENT ONE (1) VALID IDENTIFICATION CARD LIKE DRIVER'S LICENSE, GSIS ID, SSS ID, POSTAL ID, PASSPORT, PRC ID AND COMPANY ID.

Interested parties who wish to participate in the public bidding may secure the bid form at P550.00/set from Mr. A. D. Alday, Manager, Warehousing, Inventory, Traffic and Asset Disposal Division (WITADD) at Bldg. 1, Ground Floor, NPC Head Office, Corner Agham Road and Quezon Ave., Diliman, Q.C. or call telephone no. 922-8431. **Deadline for issuance of bid form is 4:30 p.m. January 11, 2006.**

For the Materials Management Department

(Sgd.) **FELIX B. TACATA, JR.**
OIC, MMD

(PDI - Dec. 12, 13 & 14, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
City Government of Zamboanga
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
City Hall, Zamboanga City
Tel. No. (062) 992-7763

SF-GOOD-05
SOL. No. CL – 05-12-0387

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The *City Government of Zamboanga*, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers / manufacturers / distributors / contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project.

Name of Contract	*Location / Office*	*Brief Description*	*Approved Budget for the Contract*	*Contract Duration / P. R. No.*	*Delivery Period*
1. Security Services	CEO-Motorpool	Security Guards	694,368.00	100-06-01-002	January 1, 2006 to December 31,2006
	CGSO		5,092,032.00	100-06-01-003	
	CSWDO		347,184.00	100-06-01-004	
	OSSP		347,184.00	100-06-01-005	
	SP		694,368.00	100-06-01-006	
	CMO-Sports		810,096.00	100-06-01-007	
	Civil Registrar		347,184.00	100-06-01-008	
	City Environment & Natural Resources		1,735,920.00	100-06-01-009	
	City Agriculture		347,184.00	100-06-01-012	
	Admin -Sta Cruz		231,456.00	100-06-01-014	
	Admin -Main Market		578,640.00	100-06-01-015	
	Admin.-Slaughterhouse		347,184.00	100-06-01-016	
	CMO-Coliseum		578,640.00	100-06-01-018	
			12,151,440.00		
2. Janitorial Services	CGSO	Janitors/Aviary Maintenance	1,839,552.00	100-06-01-010	January 1, 2006 to December 31,2006
	CGSO (Aviary)		1,500,000.00	100-06-01-011	
	CMO		501,696.00	100-06-01-013	
	CMO-Coliseum		250,848.00	100-06-01-017	
			4,092,096.00		

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR)

The schedule of BAC activities are as follows:

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	December 13-25, 2005
2. Pre-bid Conference will be conducted at City Budget Office, City Hall, Zamboanga City	December 17, 2005
3. Opening of Bids	December 30, 2005
4. Bid Evaluation	December 30, 2005
5. Post Qualification	December 30, 2005
6. Notice of Award	December 31, 2005

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P2,500.00 on item no.1 and P1,300.00 on item no. 2 to the City Treasurer.

The City Government of Zamboanga assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) **VIRGINIA SAN AGUSTIN GARA**
BAC Chairman

(PDI - Dec. 12 & 17, 2005)

SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION

Republic of the Philippines
Second Judicial Region
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
Branch 27
Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya

GIL DOMINGUIANO, et al.,
Plaintiffs
- versus - Civil Case No. 6726
ERNESTO PALMA, et al.,
Defendants.
x - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - x

ORDER

Citing section 14, Rule 14 of the 1997 Rules of Civil Procedure, the plaintiff, through an ex-parte motion filed on 27 October 2005, sought for the service of summons unto defendant-spouses Ernesto and Lina Palma through publication.

This tribunal is inclined to affirmatively act on the motion. It appears that indeed, the whereabouts of defendant-spouses is unknown and cannot be ascertained by diligent inquiry. Relative thereto, the Supreme Court ruled in the case of Mangila v. Court of Appeals, 387 SCRA 162 that "if the defendant's whereabouts could not be ascertained after the sheriff had served the summons at her given address then the plaintiff should immediately ask the court for the service of summons by publication on the defendant".

WHEREFORE, the Motion to Allow Service of Summons by Publication filed by the plaintiff is hereby GRANTED. The plaintiff is hereby directed to cause the publication of his complaint in a newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines.

Furnish the parties and their respective counsels a copy of this Order for their information and/or compliance.

SO ORDERED.

Done this 8th day of November 2005.

JOSE B. ROSALES
Judge

Republic of the Philippines
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
Second Judicial Region
BRANCH 27
Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya

GIL DOMINGUIANO AND RAYMUNDO BOLIVAR,
Plaintiffs, Civil Case No. 6726
- versus -
FOR: RECONVEYANCE AND DAMAGES

SPOUSES ERNESTO PALMA AND LINA PALMA AND EQUITABLE PCI BANK, SOLANO BRANCH, NUEVA VIZCAYA,
Defendants.
X - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - x

COMPLAINT

PLAINTIFFS, by counsel, to this Honorable Court, respectfully allege:

1. They are Filipino citizens, of legal age, married; Gil Dominguiano resides at Santiago City and Raymundo Bolivar is a resident of Luna, Cabarroguis, Quirino;

2. Defendants Spouses Ernesto Palma and Lina Palma are also Filipino citizens, of legal age with Provincial Address at San Luis, Diadi, Nueva Vizcaya and City Address at No. 611 M.V. delos Santos Street, Sampaloc, Manila. However, plaintiff Dominguiano went to Sampaloc, Manila specifically at No. 611 M.V. delos Santos Street, but he was informed that said defendants-spouses have long left this address as boarders leaving no known address; the other defendant, Equitable PCI Bank is a banking institution engaged in business in the Municipality of Solano, Nueva Vizcaya where it could receive summons;

Defendants – the Palma spouses could be served summons at their provincial address – San Luis, Diadi, Nueva Vizcaya because they are no longer residing at their city address at No. 611 M.V. delos Santos, Sampaloc, Manila and to serve them summons at said former address is just a waste of time, effort and money;

3. That on November 23, 1981, plaintiffs Gil Dominguiano and Ernesto Bolivar and defendant Ernesto Palma purchased from Rosalina Sta. Maria, a parcel of land located at San Luis Diadi, Nueva Vizcaya with an area of 25,159 square meters, more or less, which purchase was evidenced by a Deed of Absolute Sale entered in the notarial register of Notary Public Jose Godofredo Naui as Doc. No. 720; Page No. 20; Book No. IV; Series of 1981 which was registered as Entry No. 115565 on vendor's T.C.T. No. T-31869 which was cancelled and in lieu thereof, T.C.T. No T-56962 was issued in the names of the co-owners Gil Dominguiano, Raymundo Bolivar and Ernesto Palma (defendant). A simple copy of the Deed of Sale and vendor's TCT No. 31869 are hereto attached as Annexes "A" and "B" and made integral parts of this complaint; however, a copy of T.C. T. No. T-56962 in the names of the three (3) co-owners – Gil Dominguiano, Raymundo Bolivar and Ernesto Palma (defendant) which cancelled the vendor's title (Annex "B") cannot be attached as an Annex to this complaint because it cannot be found in the files of the Registry of Deeds of this province;

4. When plaintiff Dominguiano went to the United States sometime in the 80's, he entrusted to his co-owner Ernesto Palma (defendant) all the documents relative to the property, like the vendor's transfer certificate of title, the deed of sale executed by the vendor and her tax declaration to effect the registration of the deed of sale, but requested Ernesto Palma that before he, (Dominguiano) will leave for abroad, the latter must show to him, that he has registered already the deed of sale and obtained the title in their (Dominguiano, Bolivar and Palma) names which he (Palma) did or complied with; however, defendant Ernesto Palma requested that he will keep their owner's duplicate copy of the title and negotiable for the sale of the property if there are buyers interested. Plaintiff Gil Dominguiano agreed.

5. When plaintiff Gil Dominguiano arrived in the country sometime in 1990, he tried to contact his co-owner defendant Ernesto Palma at his provincial address at San Luis, Diadi, Nueva Vizcaya but he was informed that he left already his residence and went to Manila; said plaintiff made further verification regarding the property and his verification discloses the following: (a) defendants Ernesto Palma and wife have obtained their TCT No. 100809 on September 23, 1996 over the whole 25,159 square meters previously conveyed by Rosalina Sta. Maria to the three of them – Gil Dominguiano, Raymundo Bolivar and Ernesto Palma as shown by Annex "C"; (b) defendants Ernesto Palma and wife Lina subdivided the 25,5159 square meters and mortgaged 6,153 square meters, more or less, with co-defendant Equitable PCI Bank which has a market value of P445,500.00 as per Tax Declaration hereto attached as Annex "D" and made part hereof for the computation of the filing fees and other legal fees;

6. Defendants-spouses Ernesto Palma and Lina Palma were able to accomplish the acts narrated in the immediately preceding paragraph through breach of trust, fraud, trickery, deception, falsification and misrepresentation;

7. Defendant Equitable PCI Bank had acted in bad faith in accepting the mortgage of the portion of 6,153 square meters because it could have easily ascertained that, as per Transfer Certificate of Title No. T-56962, there are three (3) co-owners of the property and further, the mortgagors (Palma spouses) were not in actual possession of the property which was occupied by several squatters;

8. That due to the illegal criminal act of defendants Palma spouses, plaintiffs were compelled to come to court to litigate to protect their rights and interest and were forced to engage the services of counsel for a professional fee of P25,000.00.

WHEREFORE, premises considered, it is respectfully prayed to the Honorable Court to render judgment in favor of plaintiffs, as follows:

1. Declaring that GIL DOMINGUIANO, RAYMUNDO BOLIVAR and ERNESTO PALMA are co-owners of Lot 2999 of Bagabag Cadastre covered by Transfer Certificate of Title No. T-56962;
2. To declare as null and void Transfer Certificate of Title No. T-100809 in the name of defendants spouses Ernesto Palma and Lina Palma (Annex "C") and all derivative titles;
3. To declare defendant Equitable PCI bank a mortgage in bad faith;
4. Ordering defendants to pay P25,000.00 in solidum for attorney's fees and costs.

They further pray for such other reliefs or remedies deemed just and equitable in the premises.

Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya, August 15, 2005.

BASILIO P. RUPISAN
Counsel for the Plaintiffs
Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya
IBP OR No. 52224 5/12/04

VERIFICATION AND CERTIFICATION

We, GIL DOMINGUIANO and RAYMUNDO BOLIVAR, after being duly sworn, depose and say:

That we are the plaintiffs in the foregoing complaint which we caused to be prepared by our counsel, that we have furnished our counsel the necessary facts upon which our complaint is based, read the contents thereof and understood the same and that each and every allegation contained therein is true and correct according to our personal knowledge;

That we hereby certify that we have not filed a similar action involving the same or similar issue in any court of the Philippines or in any administrative body or agency of the government; that there is no such similar case pending in any court or administrative body and that should we learn of the pendency or filing of a similar action, we will inform the Honorable Court of such fact within five (5) days from notice.

GIL DOMINGUIANO
Plaintiff

RAYMUNDO BOLIVAR
Plaintiff

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 15th day of August 2005 at Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya.

ATTY. JOSE V. GAMBITO
NOTARY PUBLIC
UNTIL DEC 31, 2005
PTR NO 0093297-2005
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(PDI - Dec. 12, 2005)

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REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

CONDO/TWNHSE

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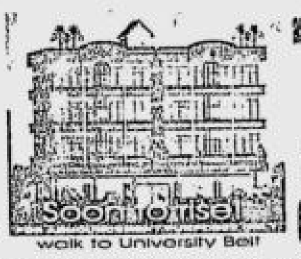

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

(2ND Publication)

The Pag-IBIG Fund, through its Bids and Awards Committee – Goods and Services (BAC-GS), invites qualified contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the **Supply and Maintenance of Ornamental (Indoor) Plants at the Pag-IBIG Fund Corporate Headquarters and NCR Branches for Y2006-Y2007 (Lease Contract Basis)** with an Approved Budget of **Two Million Three Hundred Eighteen Thousand Six Hundred Eighty Eight 00/100 Pesos (P2,318,688.00) Only.**

Prospective bidders must have the experience in undertaking a contract similar to the subject of bidding within the required period specified in the Terms of Reference (TOR) and a contract amount of at least 50% of the approved budget. The Eligibility Check/ Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted accordingly.

Bid Documents will be made available to prospective bidders starting **December 12, 2005** from the Procurement Section, General Services 7th Floor, Atrium of Makati Condominium, Makati Avenue, Makati City upon payment of the required Five Hundred and 00/100 Pesos (P500.00) to the Cash Division, Treasury Department, Pag-IBIG Fund Corporate Headquarters.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bid Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

Pre-Bid Conference shall be held on **December 27, 2005** at Room 602, 6th Floor, Pag-IBIG Fund Multi-Purpose Hall, The Atrium of Makati Condominium, Makati Ave., Makati City at 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon.

Submission of Eligibility Requirements and Opening of Bids is tentatively scheduled on January 9, 2006 at Room 602, 6th Floor, Pag-IBIG Fund Multi-Purpose Hall, The Atrium of Makati Condominium, Makati Ave., Makati City at 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon.

The Pag-IBIG Fund reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any informality or accept such bids as may be considered advantageous to the government. Further, the Fund assumes no obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for expenses or losses that may be incurred in participating in this bidding.

For further inquiries and/or information, please call Messrs. Angeles P. Balena, Jose Maria M. Diaz or Cesar V. Racoma at 811-42-62, 894-58-15 or visit our Corporate Website at http://www.pagibigfund.gov.ph or e-mail us at hdmfgpis@info.com.ph.

(Sgd.) **Emma Linda B. Faria**
Senior Vice President, Technical Support
Chair, BAC-GS

(PDI – Dec. 12 & 19, 2005)

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Republic of the Philippines
MACTAN-CEBU BRIDGE MANAGEMENT BOARD
Office of the Provincial Governor
Cebu Capitol, Cebu City

INVITATION TO BID

The Mactan-Cebu Bridge Management Board (MCBMB), through the Bids and Awards Committee of the Cebu Provincial Government, pursuant to MCBMB Resolution No. 2005-16, invites all interested parties who wish to participate in the public bidding for the RENTAL/LEASE of 130 LAMP POSTS located at the First Mandaue-Mactan and the Marcelo Fernan Bridges for advertisement purposes, with a floor price of PhP110,000.00 per month for 12 months (1 February 2006 – 31 January 2007)

Sealed bids will be received by the bids and Awards Committee – Goods and Services (BAC-GS) of the Cebu Provincial Government through its Secretariat, at the BAC Conference Room, Office of the Provincial General Services, 2nd Floor, Cebu Provincial Capitol Building, Capitol, Cebu City. The schedule of activities relative to the bidding is listed as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	December 5, 2005 – Jan. 4, 2006
2. Pre-bid Conference	December 16, 2005, 10:00 a.m.
3. Opening of Bids	January 5, 2006, 10:00 a.m.

Bids may be secured from the BAC-GS Secretariat at the aforementioned address, upon presentation of an official letter of intent and payment of a non-refundable amount of ONE THOUSAND PESOS (P 1,000) ONLY to the Cash Receipts Division, Office of the Provincial Treasurer.

All Bids (in pesos) must be accompanied by a bid security, payable to the Provincial Treasurer of Cebu, either in the form of cash, cashier's check or manager's check, equivalent to one percent (1%) of the floor price (rental for 12 months). Bids and bid securities shall be valid for at least ninety (90) days. Failure to enclose the required bid security in the form and amount prescribed herein shall automatically disqualified the bid.

The MCBMB reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any defect or informality of the bid proposals received and to accept the offer it deems most advantageous to government.

For more information, please contact the BAC Secretariat at tel. nos. 253-9614 / 254-1629 or 416-6065.

(Sgd.) GOV. GWENDOLYN F. GARCIA
MCBMB Chairman

(PDI - Dec. 5 & 12, 2005)

ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB, INC.
Ayala Alabang Village, Muntinlupa City

ANNOUNCEMENT

Please be informed that the Food & Beverage operation of the Club is up for bidding.

Interested bidders may get the requirements from the Office of the General Manager and submit the said requirements on or before DECEMBER 22, 2005, together with your bid.

Minimum bid:
- 15% of Gross Sales for F&B outlets
- 20% of Gross Sales for Banquets and Catering

Thank you very much.

The House Committee

(PDI - Dec. 12, 2005)

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NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given that PAG-IBIG HOUSING BOND Cert. Nos. 009044-49 Denomination P5000.00 each issued by the Home Pag-Ibig Fund under the name of DOMINADOR A. BAUTISTA were lost. pls Call /Text 0919-8491163. If no contest received new cert. will be issued (PDI-Nov. 28, Dec. 5, & 12, 2005)

PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late Bernardo Amandy has been extrajudicially settled by his heirs, Generosa Vargas-Amandy, Rev. Fr. Alex Vargas Amandy, and Amelia Amandy-Jacinto, before Notary Public Marilyn L. Gargantiel of Q.C as per Doc #673, Page #109, Book #2, Series of 2001 (PDI-Dec. 12, 19, 26, 2005)

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OBITUARIES

THE HERITAGE PARK
FORT BONIFACIO
Funeral Home and Crematory
845-2334 to 38; 845-2440

"For God
so loved the world,
that He gave His
only begotten Son,
that whoever
believes in Him shall
not perish but have
everlasting life."
John 3:16

MANUELA "Liling" FLORENDO

of Naguilian, La Union and Baguio City

Peacefully returned to her Creator
on December 9, 2005 at the age of 89.

Her beloved husband **CONSTANTE** (†), her loving children **OSCAR** (†) & **BECKY** (†), **ART & ANGIE, P.I. & MANNY, BOOTS & BETH, BONG & LILIA**, grandchildren **OSCAR JR., FERDINAND, DIANE, JOHN MICHAEL, ARLENE & REMMON, ALLAN & ANNA MELISSA, NEL, MAELA, CARLO, ANDRE, PAOLO, LEROY** and **ELI**, and great-grandson **ANTONIO MIGUEL** mourn her passing and wish her eternal rest.

Her remains lie in state at the family residence in Naguilian, La Union and will be transferred to La Funeraria Paz, Baguio City today, December 12, 2005.

Interment will be on Wednesday, December 14, 2005 at the Baguio Memorial Park after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at St. Vincent Church, Naguilian Road, Baguio City.

Anatalia Bala Garcia

Passed away in the GRACE of our LORD
on December 10, 2005 at the age of 99.

Her bereaved children and children-in-law **MARANGAL & ROSARIO DOMINGO, DALISAY & MANUEL TOLIBAS, MAHINHIN & ANANIAS BERDIN** (†), **PAGASA & BENJAMIN TRINIDAD, BAYANI & CHARITY DOMINGO, FILIPINA & FERNANDO TIBAYAN, LAKAMBINI & REYNALDO ALON, AMOR & RENATO MALAHITO** (†); grandchildren; great grandchildren; **ROSARIO & ALFONSO DIMAANO**, sister and brother-in-law ; nieces and nephews; other relatives and friends request the pious readers to join them in praying for her eternal happiness in heaven.

Her body lies in state at the MARIAN MEMORIAL CHAPELS, MARCOS HIGHWAY, ANTIPOLO CITY.

Interment will be on December 15, 2005 at the LOYOLA MEMORIAL PARK, MARIKINA CITY at 3:00 P.M. after the 2:00 P.M. memorial service.

An obituary with a
picture can be a
fitting tribute to
your departed
loved one.

Always caring...
INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
● Copy of Death Certificate ● Any identification document (I.D.)

Patria Libre Mogarte

October 10, 1916 – December 8, 2005

Her husband, **Serafin** (†), children and in-laws **Joy Anne** and **Exequiel Mariano, Jo** and **Levy Torres, Ray** and **Mavic Mogarte**, grandchildren: **Archie, Jocelie, Levin, Reginald** and **Pia**; Sisters: **Visayas Libre – Sevilla** and **Patrocinio Libre** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Sto. Domingo Church, Quezon Ave. Quezon City.

Interment will be at Holy Cross Memorial Park, Novaliches, Quezon City after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.

Interment date will be announced later.

COL. (Ret.) JOSE ROSARIO AUSTRIA

Peacefully joined our Lord on December 10, 2005
at the age of 87.

His loving wife **Virginia Camacho**; children: **Rolando** and **Amy Concepcion, Jose Jr.** (†) and **Lani Yuson, Virma** and **Jimmy Castillo**; grandchildren: **Charisse, Analou, Kristine, Ramon, Jogel, Carl, Catherine, Angeli, & Michael**; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Camp Aguinaldo Mortuary.

Interment will be on the 13th of December, 2005 at Loyola Memorial Park Marikina after the 9:00AM Mass at St. Ignatius Cathedral, Camp Aguinaldo, QC.

CLASSIFIEDS

BOARD OF INVESTMENTS

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NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that IFO MECHATRONICS INC. is applying for registration with the Board of Investments (BOI) as New Export Producer of Fabricated Metal Parts and Components for Industrial Application on a Non-Pioneer Status with the following capacities:

Motor Type Valve	- 2,854 units per year
Parts & Component	- 1,500,000 pieces per year

with project/plant site located at Area 7-A Brandrex Building, Argonaut Highway, Boton Area Subic Bay Freeport Zone, Olongapo City.

Any person with valid objection/s on the above-mentioned project may file his/her objection in writing, under oath, with the BOI within (3) days from the date of this publication.

(Sgd.) RUDY B. CAÑA
Director
Project Evaluation and Registration Department

Industry & Investments Building 385 Sen. Gil J. Puyat Avenue Makati City, Philippines
Tel. (632) 897-6682 Fax Nos. (632) 895-3521 (IPG) (632) 895-3981 (IG) (623) 895-3978 (TSG) (632) 890-3051 (AD) E-mail OSAC@boi.gov.ph Homepage http://www.boi.gov.ph
Cable address: INVESTBOARD P.O. Box 1872 Makati

(PDI - Dec. 12 2005)

Office of the President
BCDA
Bases Conversion and Development Authority

ATTENTION ALL BUYERS AND BROKERS INTERESTED IN PACIFIC PLAZA TOWER UNITS

BCDA is disposing its inventory of Pacific Plaza Tower units according to the following pricing scheme and terms and conditions:

1. P22,500,000.00, inclusive of VAT and broker's commission, for regular units lower than 10th floor, P23,500,000.00, inclusive of VAT and broker's commission, for regular units higher than 10th floor; At least P53,000,000.00, inclusive of VAT and broker's commission, for Penthouse D South;
2. Local transfer tax, documentary stamp taxes (DST) and miscellaneous and registration fees are for the account of the buyer;
3. Terms of payment shall either be:
   - For regular units, cash or 50% downpayment, 50% in 12 equal monthly installments without interest, payable in post-dated checks. Turnover of the unit to the buyer shall be upon 50% downpayment; all taxes, fees and dues on the unit shall be for the account of the buyer upon turn-over. Transfer of title of the unit to the buyer shall be upon full payment of the purchase price; and
   - For Penthouse D South, the first buyer to pay the full payment shall be the selected buyer of the unit.
4. All titles are free, clean and clear of any encumbrance.
5. Most of the regular units have existing Lease Contracts with various tenants. BCDA requires the buyers to respect and comply with the terms and conditions of existing Lease Contracts.

BCDA INVENTORY LIST OF PACIFIC PLAZA TOWER UNITS:

North Tower.	18D, 25B, 41C
South Tower:	2C, 3A, 3B, 6B, 8A, 9B, 14D, 24D, Penthouse D

Interested parties are encouraged to contact BCDA for details. Please call Ms. Aileen Zosa or Ms. Cherrie Jongco at 816-10-16 or 816-66-66 local 110.

(PDI- December 12, 2005)

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for early registration and inquiry
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2nd Floor Bonifacio Stopover
Bonifacio Global City

NFA intensifies palay buying, readies incentives and logistics

THE NATIONAL FOOD Authority has already bought some 402, 283 bags of palay as it intensifies its procurement operations nationwide. As of Oct. 26, the NFA has achieved 44% of its procurement target of 906,500 bags for the month of October. The NFA is targeting to buy 3,443,800 bags of palay for the entire year. At least 21.99% of this target has been achieved or a total of 757,375 bags. NFA Administrator Gregorio Y. Tan, Jr. has instructed the agency's field officials to actively undertake procurement operations through the agency's 530 buying stations strategically located nationwide. Tan said palay farmers may take advantage of the NFA's buying price of P10 per kilogram with additional incentives of P0.50 per kilogram for drying, delivery, and cooperative development. The NFA is also undertaking a program with local government units (LGUs) or legislators to help increase the buying price of palay by as much as P1.00 per kilogram or a total of P11/kg. The LGUs or legislators may enter into an agreement with the NFA under the Palay Marketing Assistance for Legislators and Local Government Units (PALLGU) program which gives them the right to purchase stocks from NFA with a P1/kg premium for the farmer-sellers. The stocks bought under PALLGU may be stored in designated NFA warehouses for free for up to four months. Meanwhile, the food agency is maintaining 328 units of mechanical dryers across the country which farmer cooperatives may use with minimum fees. For more information on NFA programs, the public may send their inquiries, suggestions or complaints via the Text NFA Program through mobile number 0917-6210927.

ONLINE

www.henrybutcher.com
On the instructions of Akasya BPV, Inc.

ONLINE AUCTION

Heavy Tank Fabrication Equipment
Location: Subic, Pasig, Manila - Philippines
Sale Closes: Thursday, 15 December 2005 - 8:00pm (local time)

Location: SBMA, Subic, Philippines
MG HELLER A2525 3 Roll Double Pinch Hydraulic Plate Bending Rolls (2001); MESSER GRIESHAM SC 2XR CNC Two-Head Plasma Cutting Machine; YODER Weld Manipulator w/ LINCOLN NA5 Arc Welder; RANSOME 20T Cap. Welding Positioner; KOMATSU FD70-3 7T Cap. Diesel Forklift

Location: Pasig, Philippines
AMERICAN Radial Arm Drill; DO ALL Horizontal Bandsaw

Location: Manila Yacht Club
RAPIER Patrol Boat

Viewing: Strictly by Appointment
To register please visit our website: www.henrybutcher.com
For further information please contact Obert Cinco at
Tel: 852 2910 loc. 109 Email: obert.cinco@henrybutcher.com

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SULTAN KUDARAT ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Tacurong City

INVITATION TO BID

1.) The Sultan Kudarat Electric Cooperative, Inc. (SUKELCO) is inviting sealed bids from eligible bidders for the Supply, Delivery, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of One (1) unit SF6 Gas Circuit Breaker Dead Tank with the following specifications:

Rated Lightning Impulse Withstand Voltage:	350 kV
Rated Short Circuit Breaking Current :	25 kA or greater
Maximum Working Voltage:	72.5 kV
Rated Voltage:	69kV
Rated Current:	1,250 A
Rated Frequency:	60 Hz

2) The SF6 Power Circuit Breaker and all accessories must be brand new and either Chinese, US or European brand/made. Civil works include foundation for the Power Circuit Breaker and the battery cabinet.

3) SUKELCO prefers bidders that accept P500T downpayment and offer financing scheme of the balance for six (6) months. Bidders must show an Official Manufacturer's Certificate from the manufacturer. Successful bidder must present IEC or other equivalent international standards Test Results. Bidders who wish to apply for eligibility may submit, together with the bids, the following requirements, duly notarized: 1) DTI business name registration, 2) SEC registration certificate, 3) Mayor's permit and/or municipal license for the current year, 4) Copy of TIN issued by BIR or copy of BIR registration showing TIN, 5) Notarized statement of the prospective bidder that it is not "blacklisted" or barred from bidding any government or private agency, office or corporation, 6) Audited Financial Statements, stamped "received" by the BIR.

4) Deadline for submission of sealed bids shall be on December 22, 2005

5) Submit sealed bids to:

The Chairman
Pre-Bids and Awards Committee
Sultan Kudarat Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Tacurong City

6) SUKELCO reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the cooperative

7) Interested bidders may obtain further information at the following address:

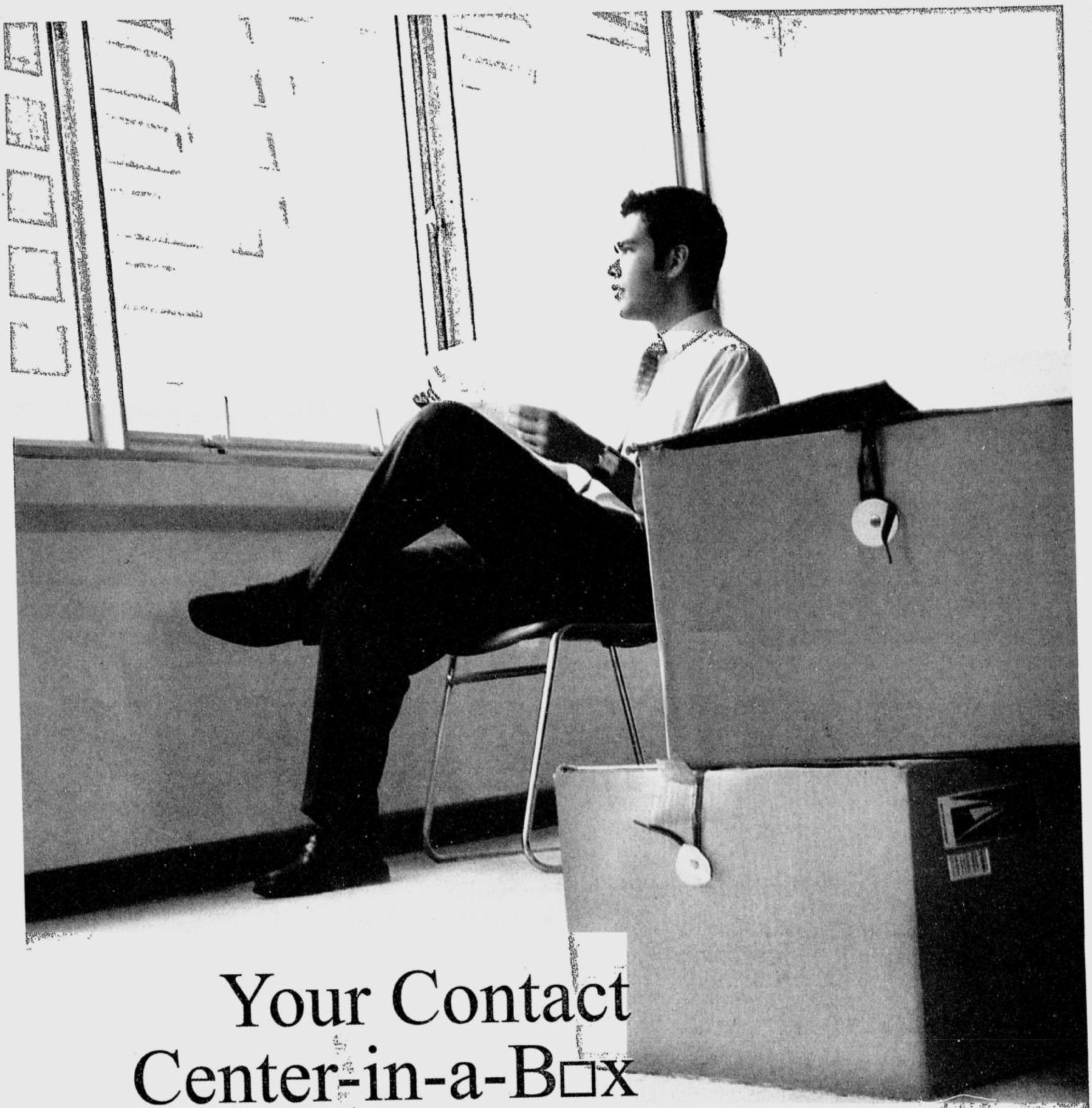
Godofredo F. Sanchez
Engineering Department
Sultan Kudarat Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Tacurong City
064-200-3155/4050
Fax No. 064-200-3156

(Sgd.) DEMETRIO O. JEREZ
General Manager

(PDI – Dec. 5 & 12, 2005)

PMAP SIGNS MOU WITH PIRS

The Personnel Management Association of the Phils signs Memo of Understanding with Philippine Industrial Relations Society(PIRS) during PIRS' learning session held at the UP Solair, Diliman, Quezon City. Under this MOU, PMAP and PIRS recognize each others as partners in advocating and pursuing professional development in the field of Human Resource Management. Photo shows (left to right) Dean Jorge Sibal, UP School of Labor and Industrial Relations, Mr. Art P. Florentin, PMAP director and in charge of Functional Group Committee, Ms. Lina A. Aseneta, PMAP president, Mr. Ferdie G. Atanacio, president of PIRS and chairman of PMAP Functional Group, and Ms. Noly T. Cayabyab, PIRS VP.



Your Contact Center-in-a-Box

Believe this as you read it. The hosted contact center solution will transform the BPO industry. Doors will open, walls will come down; nearly anyone can make a dedicated and intelligent entry in the exciting Contact Center business. It could even be you.

It's as easy as leasing a contact center platform with PLDT OnCall over your own dedicated line, at a small fraction of buying multimillion dollar contact center equipment. Leasing (as opposed to outright buying) won't burn a hole in your pocket while you operate your contact center. And you will be using the same industry leading, best-in-class platform in the world's largest and most technologically advanced contact centers. You'll be the new kid on the block without having to pay the full membership fee.

The PLDT OnCall cost advantages don't stop there. Your virtual contact center does not require additional rented space to house equipment, or monthly utilities charges to operate it. And you can skip expensive upgrades that you'll have to make yourself. PLDT OnCall continuously enhances its hosted equipment and gives you the latest refurbishments in the market, all included in its basic service agreement. You're always online, running, and improving.

[Get the World's Best for Less] PLDT is the country partner of Avaya, the worldwide leader in Contact Center solutions. PLDT OnCall is based on the Avaya Customer Interaction Suite, which is part of the company's MultiVantage TM family of communication applications. It provides businesses with the same market-leading customer service capabilities used in large contact centers around the world.

[No Maintenance, No Worries] As a contact center operator, your business is handling client agreements and interacting with their customers, not maintenance of equipment and technology. PLDT will maintain your network equipment as necessary. PLDT OnCall runs on a fully redundant system and network, so even when the main platform is down, your operations will run seamlessly on the backup. That's the peace of mind you and your clients get with PLDT OnCall, and you can't get it anywhere else.

[Lease it all] With PLDT OnCall, you pay only for the data capacity you need, so you don't have to invest in pricey hardware you aren't going to fully utilize. Beyond the expensive platform, a contact center requires data servers, routers, and call logging hardware. Leasing data capacity through PLDT OnCall is the most cost effective route, especially for startups, niche contact centers, and smaller operations. At your option, even peripheral equipment like headsets, computers and IP phones can all be leased through PLDT OnCall to further lower your capital expenditures.

[Cost Efficient Training] One of the most costly functions of a contact center is the training of qualified agents. At your option, PLDT OnCall can put your staff through the basics. PLDT can train for a lot less than a third party agency, and far lower than if you do it on your own.

So what do you have left to do? Find your clients, focus yourself and your staff on serving their needs, and most important, make the biggest profit. That, after all, is really your business. Leave the rest to us. To find out more about PLDT OnCall, log on to www.pldtoncall.com.ph or email bizsol@pldt.com.ph, or give us a call at 874-7474.

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BUSINESS Monday
Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

PC BUYER'S GUIDE
www.pcbuyersguide.com.ph
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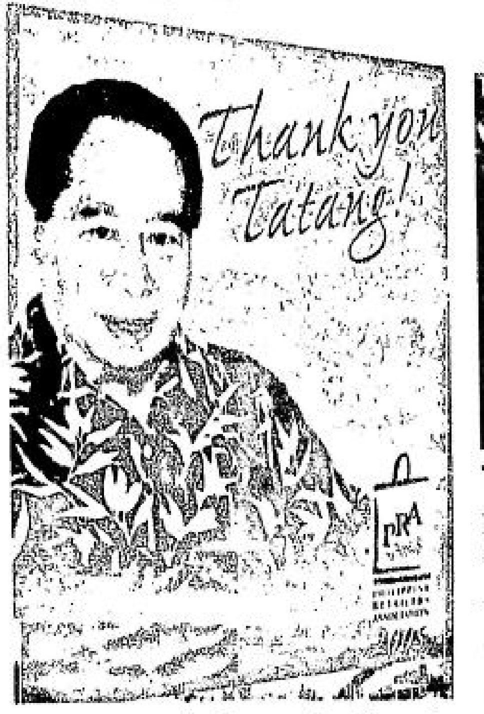
2004 National Shoppers Choice Awards

Sound bites from a man of few words



2005 Outstanding Filipino Retailers

THE SY FAMILY led by Henry Sy Sr. and wife Felicidad, children Teresita, Hansy and Herbert with the SM family.

HENRY SY SR., SM FOUNDER AND REcently named Father of Philippine Retail by the Philippine Retailers Association, is a man of few words.

At a recent CEO forum of HSBC, business executives remembered his answers easily because they were short, but substantial, such as "less talk and more work" when asked what he would do if he were the president of the country.

This line is consistent with a statement he made a few years ago: "My personal style leads towards working, not speaking. In fact, speaking before you is more difficult than building shopping malls."

No less than President Macapagal-Arroyo handed Sy the award.

In his speech, PRA president Mars Chua said, "as retailers, we have all benefited from the establishment of malls in the country. Success stories of entrepreneurs abound as their businesses grew with the growth of malls."

Chua cited "his contributions to Philippine retailing and the country as a whole—to creating over a million jobs, to raising people's aspirations and levels of sophistication abreast with international tastes and standards." The award, Chua added, was an "opportunity to thank him."

SM history

Sy opened the first Shoemart store along Rizal Avenue in downtown Manila in 1958. He conceptualized a chain of shoe stores, each characterized by a distinct merchandising layout never before attempted in the country.

In the '60s, the company expanded its shoe store chain. It was one of the pioneers in the new urban centers when it opened bigger shoe stores at the Makati Commercial Center in 1963 and Cubao in 1967.

In the '70s, Shoemart marked its shift from a shoe store to a full line department store with SM Echague, and later SM Makati in 1975. This was also the time that Shoemart became known as SM Shoemart or simply SM, a name that has become synonymous with one-stop shopping excitement.

SM positioned itself for growth in the '80s, diversifying into the supermarket and appliance store businesses.

Late 1985 marked the opening of its first shopping mall, SM City in North Edsa. SM emerged as a key player in the shopping center industry in the '90s, giving rise to the malling phenomenon in the Philippines.

Today, SM is a diverse conglomerate with core businesses in retail merchandising and shopping centers, and complementary businesses in financial services and real estate and tourism development. In early 2005, SM Investments Corp., its holding company, launched what is considered the biggest initial public offering in the Philippine Stock Exchange.

Its 22 supermalls, 25 department stores, and hundreds of retail stores have become part of the lives of many Filipinos. More than 1.5 million customers visit SM Supermalls everyday.

He gives back to the community via the SM Foundation.

SM has made its impact in the local and international business community, and cited by leading regional and international publications.

In the few times that he has spoken in public, Sy has imparted simple yet profound words of wisdom worth a thousand quotes and sound bites. Here is Henry Sy Sr. in his own words.

Early lessons

"Early in life, I learned from my parents, especially my father, the importance of discipline, hard work, and good credit. My father was a trader in China. Looking for better opportunities, he came to this country and opened a *sari-sari* store. At the age of 12, I followed him to Manila.

Vision on shopping centers

"While I was on my buying trips, I saw the shopping center development across the US from east to west coast. I knew this could happen in the Philippines.

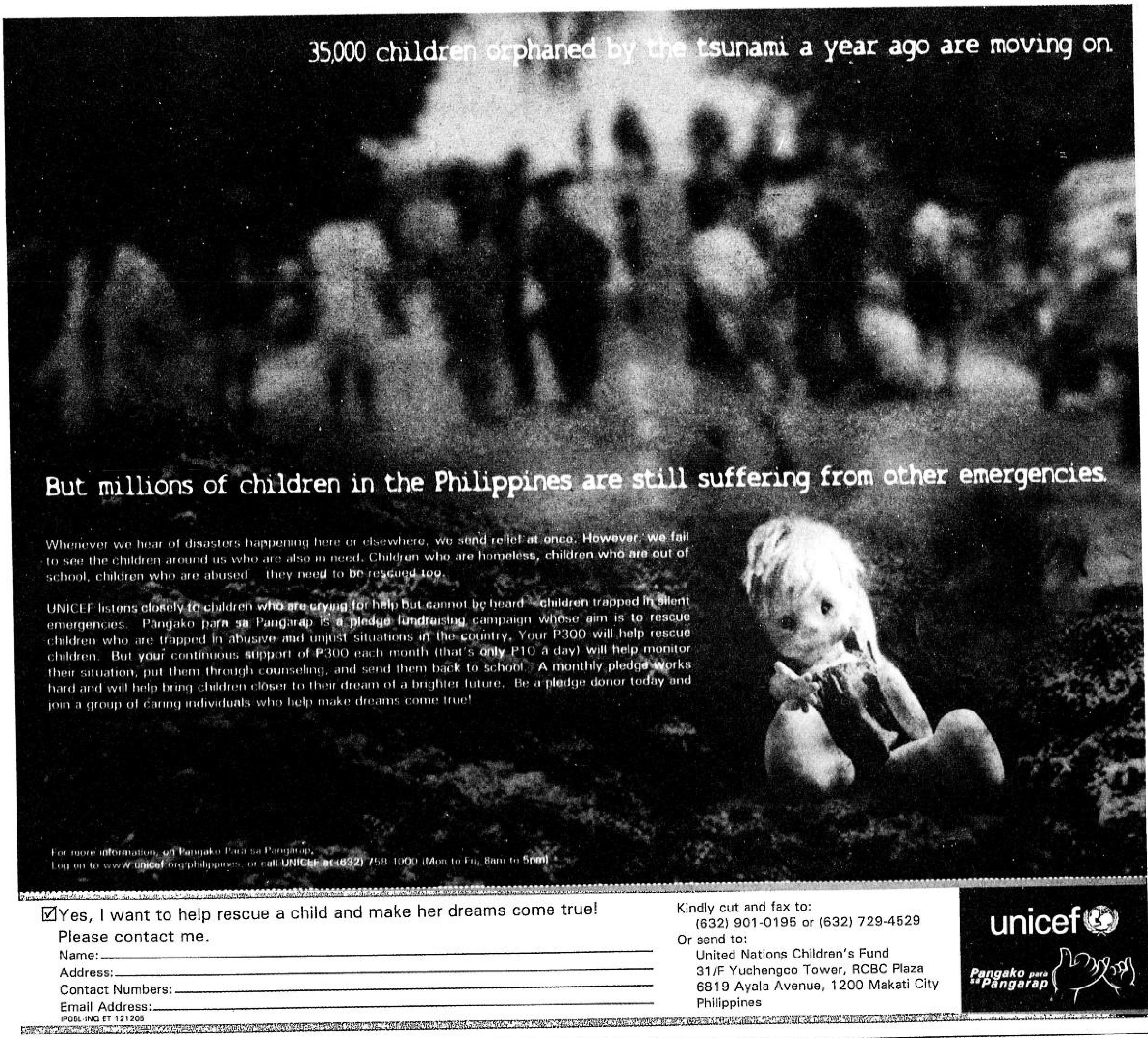
Work and words

"While I am not big with words, I am big and bold in dreams and vision. By nature, I am curious and adventurous. I like the excitement of change and new and better ideas. I look for excellence in performance."

Management style

"I am hands-on and personalized in my management style. I do not do things

SOUNDBITES/ B2-4


35,000 children orphaned by the tsunami a year ago are moving on.

But millions of children in the Philippines are still suffering from other emergencies.

Whenever we hear of disasters happening here or elsewhere, we send relief at once. However, we fail to see the children around us who are also in need. Children who are homeless, children who are out of school, children who are abused — they need to be rescued too.

UNICEF listens closely to children who are crying for help but cannot be heard — children trapped in silent emergencies. Pangako para sa Pangarap is a pledge fundraising campaign whose aim is to rescue children who are trapped in abusive and unjust situations in the country. Your P300 will help rescue children. But your continuous support of P300 each month (that's only P10 a day) will help monitor their situation, put them through counseling, and send them back to school. A monthly pledge works hard and will help bring children closer to their dream of a brighter future. Be a pledge donor today and join a group of caring individuals who help make dreams come true!

For more information on Pangako Para sa Pangarap,
Log on to www.unicef.org/philippines, or call UNICEF at (632) 758 1000 (Mon to Fri, 8am to 5pm)

☑Yes, I want to help rescue a child and make her dreams come true!
Please contact me.
Name:
Address:
Contact Numbers:
Email Address:
IP05L-INQ ET 121205

Kindly cut and fax to:
(632) 901-0195 or (632) 729-4529
Or send to:
United Nations Children's Fund
31/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza
6819 Ayala Avenue, 1200 Makati City
Philippines

unicef
Pangako para sa Pangarap

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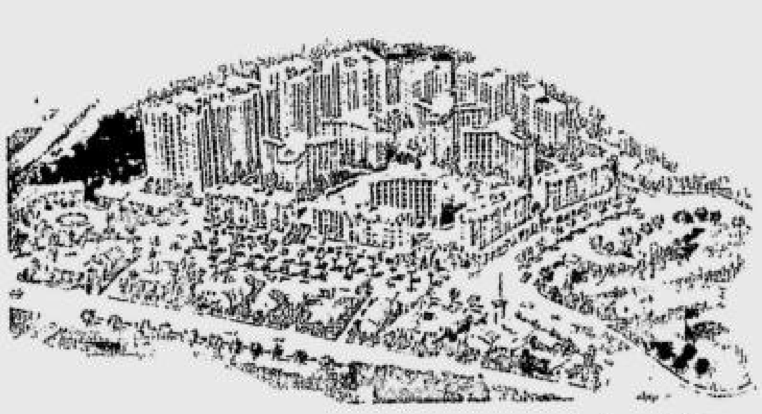
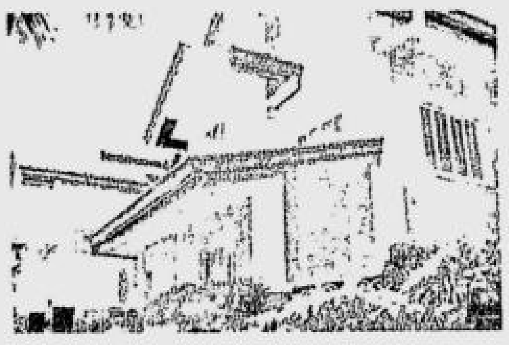
Championing Affordable Luxury

Crown Asia meets the challenge of bringing excellent value and design to Filipino homes.



Since we began creating entire communities a decade ago, we at Crown Asia have sought to bring together two apparently opposing attributes: affordability and luxury. So how does one build luxurious homes and yet make them easily attainable to most Filipinos? Compromises are often made to attain either of these attributes. However, we believe that luxury and affordability can come together, only if one were determined enough to go the extra mile to make it possible.

Part of the secret lies in the details. By tapping the best architects and engineers, as well as drawing inspiration from cultures that are renowned for design, we seek to bring innovation, superior build quality as well as excellent planning, architecture and styling to Filipinos looking for the realization of their dream homes.



Materials are sourced with a keen eye for quality and durability. Community planning spans decades into the future, by plotting out the best location for development, close to main roads, malls and commercial areas yet still retain the rustic atmosphere and open space. By sticking to these iron clad rules, we have become the country's biggest home builder, a pioneering developer of master-planned and themed communities.

Italian-inspired developments such as Citta Italia, Fortezza, Residenza, Maia Alta, Vivace and Mia Vita bring Mediterranean style and classical Roman design sensibilities to Filipino buyers. The classic lines, rich colors and elegant yet functional touches of Italian design come to life in affordable homes.

The San Francisco Victorian

Presidio
Brittany Bay

CITTA ITALIA

Maia Alta

Fortezza

Cottonwoods

Residenza

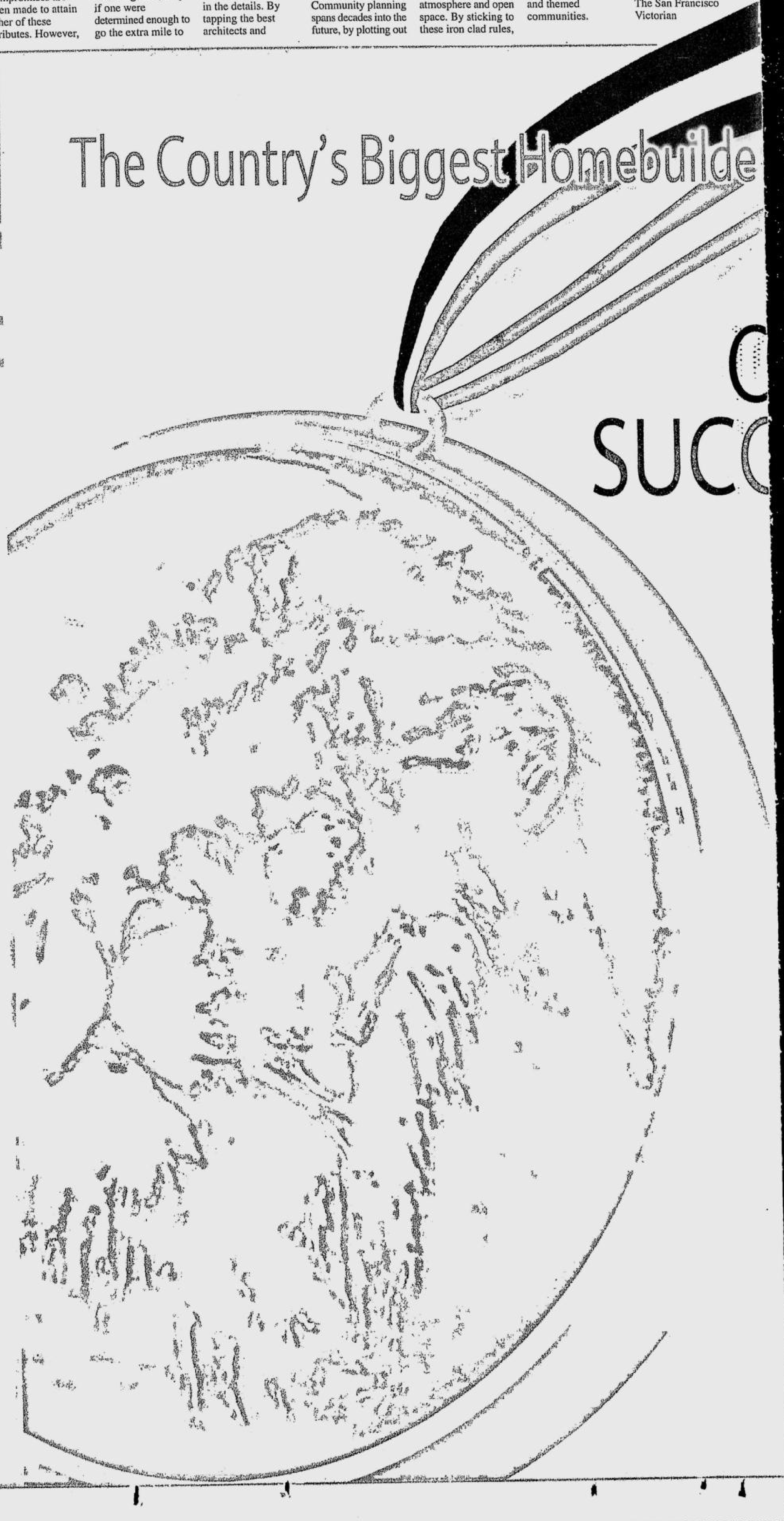
WOODBERRY
At Assumption Hills

Valenza

Mille Luce

Amalfi

Amici



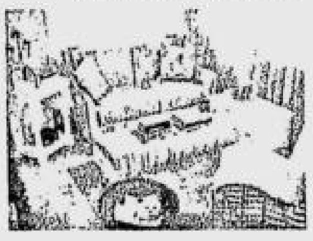
The Country's Biggest Homebuilde

C
SUCC

elegance is captured by Presidio, Crown Asia's vast vertical community at the shores of the Laguna de Bay near Sucat, Paranaque.
This growing condominium development's 18 towers are inspired by its San Francisco namesake and provide spectacular views of the lake, with the Sierra Madre mountains in the background.

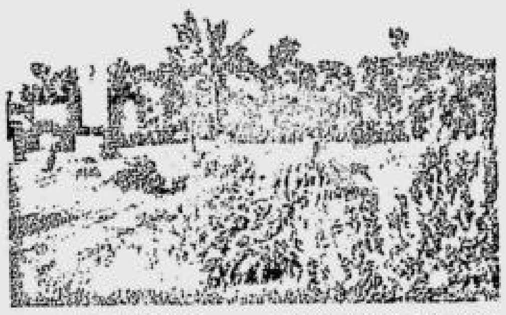
Cottonwoods and Woodberry draw their inspiration from American Country style, designed to draw nature indoors. Wood is a central design material and element, with emphasis on outdoor living spaces and family areas.

We at Crown Asia realize that delivering innovative design at realistic prices is going to be a constant challenge. Fortunately, a decade of experience and expertise has equipped us with what we need to delight the families and individuals who look to us to make their dreams come true.



The Five Core Values

Aside from our key principle of bringing affordable luxury to Filipinos, we at Crown Asia are also driven by 5 core values that have become the foundation for each and every one of our current and future projects.



Greenery – All our communities are developed with ample open areas, landscaped lawns, trees and flora. With the rise of urban sprawl and the diminishing verdant areas in the cities, the need for properly planned and landscaped breathing space has become a necessity rather than a luxury.

Security – The safety of our homes and loved ones has become a key ingredient in home selection, more so in today's troubled times. All our property developments are packaged with excellent security planning and systems, assuring homeowners of much needed peace of mind.

Choices – Every Crown Asia development strives to provide a wide array of options. We believe that the buyer comes first. While others merely provide what is easily deliverable for them, we take the extra step of providing what the buyer deserves, more choices to satisfy more needs.

Serenity – The location of each Crown Asia development must be ideally situated, along major roads or thoroughfares, but each community is master- planned to isolate itself from the din outside its gates. As you drive into each community, you are drawn into a quiet space. The peace and tranquility you experience is not by accident but entirely by design.

Attainability - A beautiful home is every Filipino's dream. What makes up this dream is what we strive for. Instead of simply making dream houses, we make ideal family spaces that are more than just architectural exercises, but rather attainable and affordable luxury homes.

* * *

And the homegrown hits just keep on coming

Distinctly Southern Italian, Amalfi is located close to some of the best schools, hospitals and commercial areas in Dasmarinas, Cavite. St. Paul's College, Asian Hospital, De La Salle University and Medical Center as well as SM Dasmarinas are all close to this Italian gem in the South.

Woodbery, Crown Asia's hilltop community in Antipolo, draws the home owner from the traffic and congestion of the city, to the fresh air and sweeping vistas of the Eastern peaks. American style homes are simply ideal for the cool air and trees that surround this dream community.

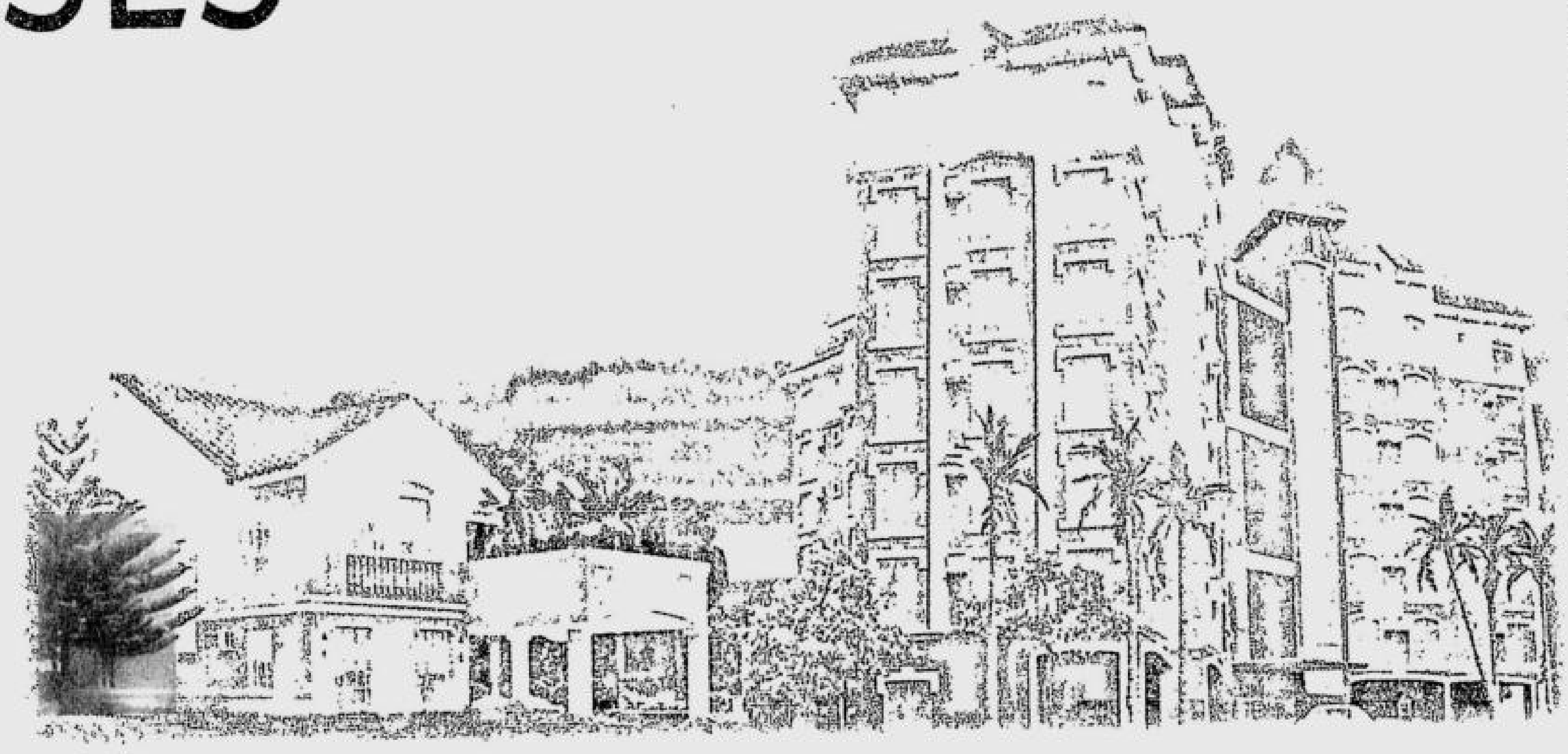
The foothills of Sta. Rosa, Laguna are the backdrop for Crown Asia's Valenza. Italian for "value", Valenza is perfectly named; close to the boom town of the South, Sta. Rosa, and right along the road to Tagaytay. Roman touches are in every home, with a view of the surrounding hills and distant mountains to match.

Located along M.L. Quezon Avenue in Antipolo, Mille Luce echoes Italian hillside communities, with its dramatically sloping lots. Residents are awarded with 360 degree views of the Metro Manila skyline and the shimmering waters of Laguna De Bay.

Italian for "friend". Amici brings back the closeness of familiar neighbors with inward facing clusters and pocket gardens. Security is excellent, with high property fences and well-lit streets. Near Daang Hari road in Alabang, Amici is the perfect choice for families or those who yearn for true community living.

Begins Yet Another Golden Decade

A LION'S SHARE
OF SOLD-OUT
CESSES



Wherever we build, our masterplanned residential properties sell in record time. Smart buyers choose us largely due to what we have come to represent over the last ten years.

We are pioneers in dramatically altering the housing landscape in the country with themed communities, each one masterplanned to visually please and ensure optimum livability.

We continue to honor service and quality as the main building block of everything we do.

We have embraced the challenges of turning the dream of a home into a daily reality for millions of Filipinos.

We were the first to introduce the concept of affordable luxury to a discriminating market and a fiercely competitive industry.

We support visionary developments by enhancing sites of immense potential for development.

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Crown Asia
Your home of choice

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Big business in higher education

MAPPING THE FUTURE

Niceto S. Poblador

IT IS COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT the quality of higher education in the Philippines is nothing short of dismal. The most recent Asiaweek ranking of the best universities in the region placed our own University of the Philippines, arguably the country's best, at the 48th slot, with a score of 53.79 percent. The country's most admired private universities, De La Salle University and Ateneo de Manila University, ranked 71st and 72nd, respectively.

As far as I can see, there have been no significant initiatives from either the public or private sectors to reverse the continuous downward trend in our educational system.

A recent development that bodes well for university education in the Philippines is the entry of big business into the educational sector such as the University of the East (Lucio Tan), the Mapua Institute of Technology (Alfonso Yuchengco), and the Centro Escolar University (Emilio Yap). While many observers decry this development as a move in the direction of further commercialization of higher education, I see this as a welcome development for three reasons: (1) It will infuse cash-strapped institutions with the required resources to upgrade facilities and program implementation; (2) it will bring about a semblance of discipline in the management university resources; and (3) through mergers and acquisitions, it may well spur a further move toward greater consolidation of higher education in the Philippines.

It has long been my position that universities should respond to the new realities of the information driven, knowledge environment and should run themselves just as progressive business firms do.

However, it is not enough that universities should make themselves more cost effective in their operations in order to generate sufficient returns to their shareholders. It is not enough that they should be market-driven and cater blindly to the immediately perceived needs of their enrollees. Universities have a much more patrician role than that. They must strive to maximize the long-run economic value of their products and services in order to satisfy the fast changing needs not only of their students, but also those of the business, public and educational sectors that benefit from their services, and those of society as a whole.

Here's how.

(1) Move away from extreme specialization and develop academic programs and courses that address wide-ranging but related problems and issues. This move would require that university administrators should veer away from their traditional, strictly discipline-based course offerings and instead develop innovative, truly cross disciplinary academic programs that meet the requirements of today's fast-paced, knowledge-driven environment.

(2) Maximize value by generating synergies through effective complementation. This can be done in either of two ways: (a) by consolidating and integrating closely related but relatively autonomous academic programs and administrative units; and (b) by linking up complementary resources within the university or from outside institutions through various forms of networking arrangements. Clustering closely related academic programs and combining insights from related professional and academic disciplines will not only enrich the universities' course offerings, but would also make it possible for universities to enjoy economies through the use of existing resources to serve more and wider ranging needs.

(3) Improve the university's delivery system. Highly competitive business firms typically adopt customer-focused strategies. This is done through continuous product innovation and through improved service delivery. In a university setting, product delivery is enhanced by improving teaching effectiveness. More than investing in sophisticated classroom technologies, this requires a greater focus on the professors who, as a rule, are notoriously ineffective on the job.

Implementing innovative moves to improve the country's system of higher education requires not only a massive shift in our concept of university administration, but also a sustained effort on the part of university administrators to bring about the necessary changes in the country's dated educational policies.

(For an extended discussion of the relevant issues, the reader is invited to go to this link on my personal website: http://nick.poblador.us/docs/university_paper.doc)

(The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is an active academic and a knowledge management consultant. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph)

Sound bites from a man of few words

From page B2-0

on impulse. I think long and hard for every project."

Relationships

"In life and in business, you need to be good hearted and trustworthy. This is the way to build long-term relationships"

Balance

"Another important thing is balance in life. When you succeed, do not change your lifestyle. Equally important, keep your feet on the ground."

Finding your purpose

"Know what you want and have a goal. Do something you like."

Planning

"You must plan well and work hard to realize it. Stay focused on whatever you do and do your best."

Hard work

"There is no substitute for hard work."

Crises and opportunities

"I have been in business for over 50 years, and have experienced many crises—in 1972, during martial law; in 1983, the Aquino assassination; in 1987-1989, the series of military coups; and worse of all, the Asian crisis. But crises produce opportunities."

"When the opportunity comes, you have to be ready to embrace it. Otherwise, it goes to somebody else."

On success

"Success is not just good luck. It is a combination of hard work, good credit standing, opportunity, readiness, and timing.

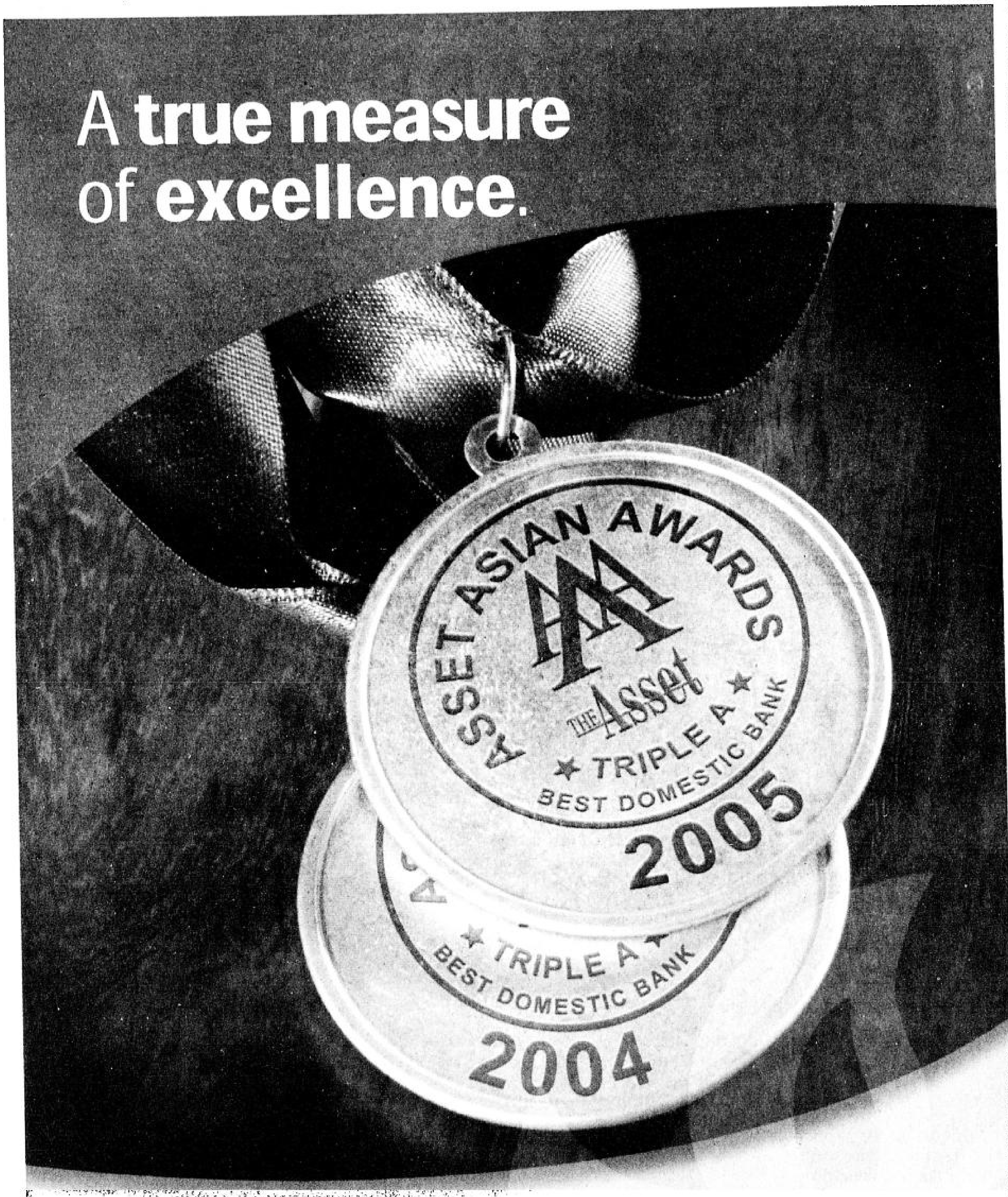
Giving back and helping others

"We must do something to help others in society. I am pleased that through SM Founadation, we are able to do many socio civic projects, and support at any one time 400 college scholars in need who come from public schools.

Why he continues to work

"On some occasions, I bump into friends whom I have not seen for a long time. They ask me, "You have done so much already. What are you still working for?"

"I tell them, I dream a lot, and I like to make things happen."



Equitable PCI Bank is the Best Domestic Bank in the Philippines for the second year in a row.

Hong Kong-based The Asset, one of Asia's leading regional finance publications, has again named Equitable PCI Bank as "The Best Domestic Bank in the Philippines for 2005" in The Asset Triple A Country Awards.

After an extensive qualitative and quantitative rating of the Bank's performance, Equitable PCI Bank was recognized for its excellence in the financial services industry in the country.

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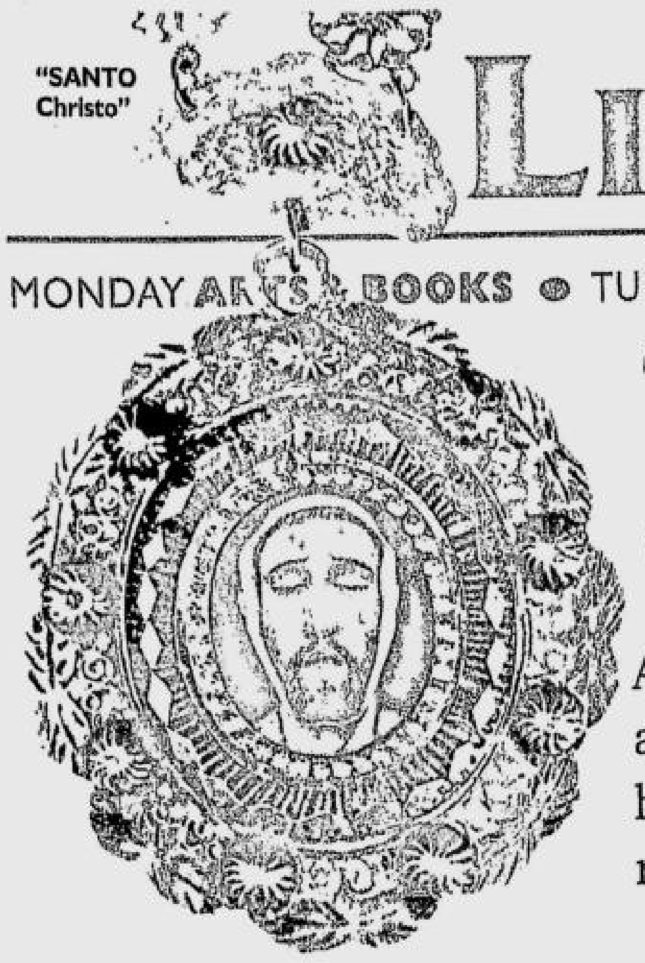
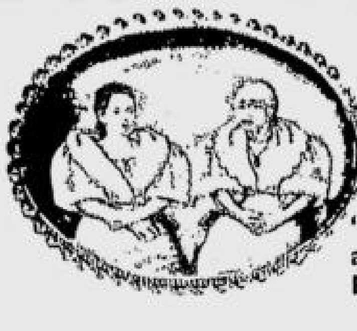
LIFESTYLE



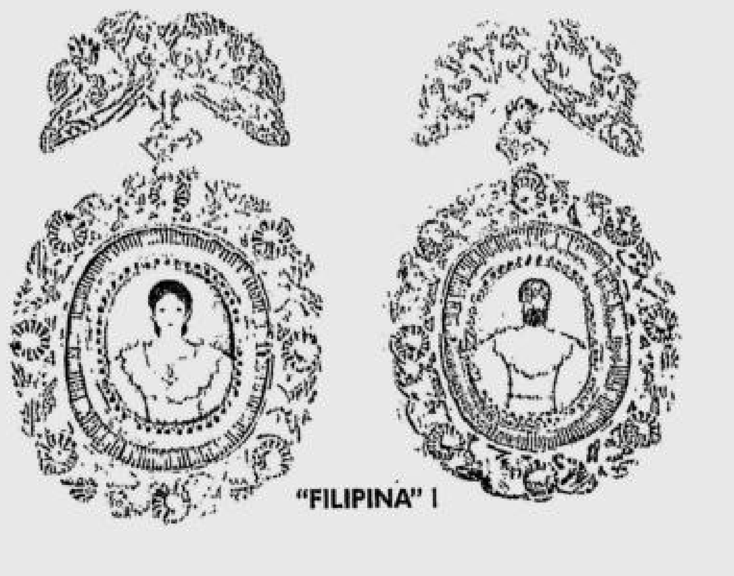
"SANTO Christo"

The romance of 'relicarios'

A young Fil-Am artist rediscovers his roots in colonial reliquaries

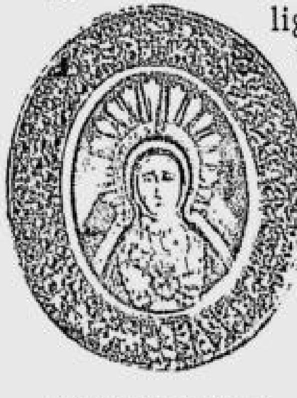


"MOTHER and Daughter"



"FILIPINA" I

WHEN THE SPANIARDS and Portuguese set out to explore and conquer the New World for the Crown, Church and themselves, their personal possessions included devotional items to inspire and comfort them in their perilous journeys: Book of Hours, rosaries, crosses, medals, triptychs, and small lockets containing religious imagery, which were know as *relicarios*.



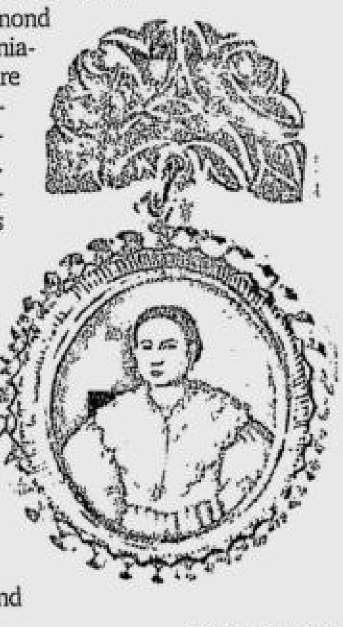
"MATER Dolorosa"

Relicarios emerged from the medieval Western European custom of treasuring relics and mementos of the saints in a variety of containers—from large sumptuous caskets of precious metals and jewels that graced cathedrals and castles, to the small, simple brass pendants worn by pilgrims and the devout.

Although relics of the saints were exported to the Americas from Europe, and relics of New World saints were collected by the faithful from their crypts, most colonial-period *relicarios* do not contain actual relics. The designation is largely symbolic. Sometimes *relicarios* contain personal mementos as well as items of sacred memory: a note, the lock of hair of a loved one, a pressed flower and so on.

In the Philippines, *relicarios* were created in a wide variety of styles, techniques and materials. Homemade *relicarios* were fashioned of simple frames of tin, brass, wood, even silver and gold that was protected by glass or even crystal. As crude as these *relicarios* often were, they nevertheless served their owner's special devotional purposes, and were much treasured by them.

Filipino-American artist Gregory Raymond Halili's new miniature paintings are the result of introspection toward *relicarios*. These new watercolor pieces are painted on ivory and encased in antique jewels. They are contemporary recreations to bring back nostalgia of treasuring devotions and memories.



"FILIPINA" 4

The subjects are divided into two categories. The first pays homage to the Philippines' indigenous Catholic images—the Madonna, Mater Dolorosa, Nuestra Señora, Santo Niño and Santo Cristo. The imagery is inspired by antique ivory carvings as well as Halili's personal antique *santo* collection.

The second category of *relicarios* is the discourse of religious themes to Filipiniana-inspired images. It is also a homage to times past inspired by vintage photographs of Filipina women in *sayas*, *ternos* and Maria Claras.

These new ivory paintings are painted in two vantage points. One can actually view the *relicarios* in front and back. The images, however minute, elicit an emotion and power that is far beyond its scale. These new *relicarios* are time machines—capsules of love and devotion, containing and preserving Philippine history and culture.

Halili was born in Manila in 1975. He received his B.F.A. from University of the Arts in Philadelphia, USA. He is represented by West Gallery in Manila, Gallery Dauphin in Singapore and Nancy Hoffman in New York City.

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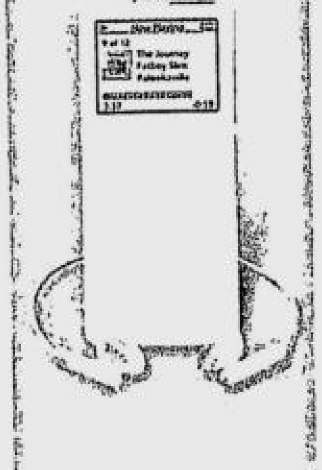

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Michael Cacnio, top brass

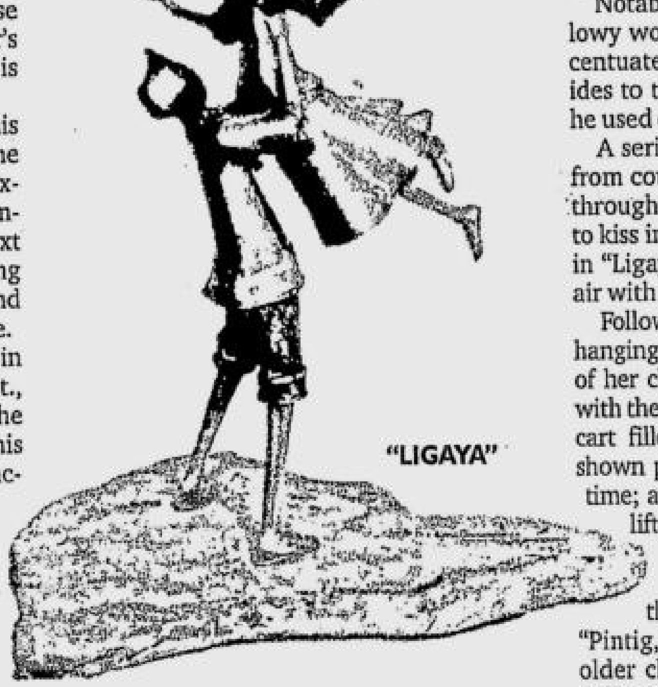
By Jessica Jalandoni-Robillos
Contributor

MICHAEL CACNIO'S LAUGH IS A loud, hearty chuckle that elicits looks from people nearby. These sudden bursts of mirth reveal this sculptor's happy, almost childlike disposition, which is embodied in his brass pieces.

Cacnio is perhaps the only sculptor in his generation who has steadily worked in the same medium for more than a decade, exhibiting extensively here and abroad, winning numerous accolades in the process. Next year he celebrates his 15th year of creating the now-familiar scenes of play, work and family that characterize the Filipino lifestyle.

"Signed with Distinction," a show in Choice Expression Gallery (Jupiter St., Makati City; 8990717/8990718), bears the Cacnio stamp. The collection includes his much-anticipated depictions of leisurely activities and everyday tasks, his joie de vivre infused into each piece. This again parlays the artist's own love for craft, that sculpting is pleasurable and not merely work.

His admiration for Swiss painter and sculptor Alberto Giacometti is seen in the elongated figures. But while Giacometti's bronze stretched forms imply man's isolation from his surroundings, Cacnio's subjects exude a vibrancy which fills and defines the spaces around them.


"LIGAYA"

Notable are the detailed clothing of his willowy women, the floral or leaf appliqués accentuated by shading—done by applying oxides to the brass, as opposed to paint, which he used on previous pieces.

A series seems to tell a love story of sorts, from courtship during a *banca* ride, to union through a graceful entwining of lovers about to kiss in mid-step, to an exultant father-to-be in "Ligaya," tossing his young wife up in the air with glee.

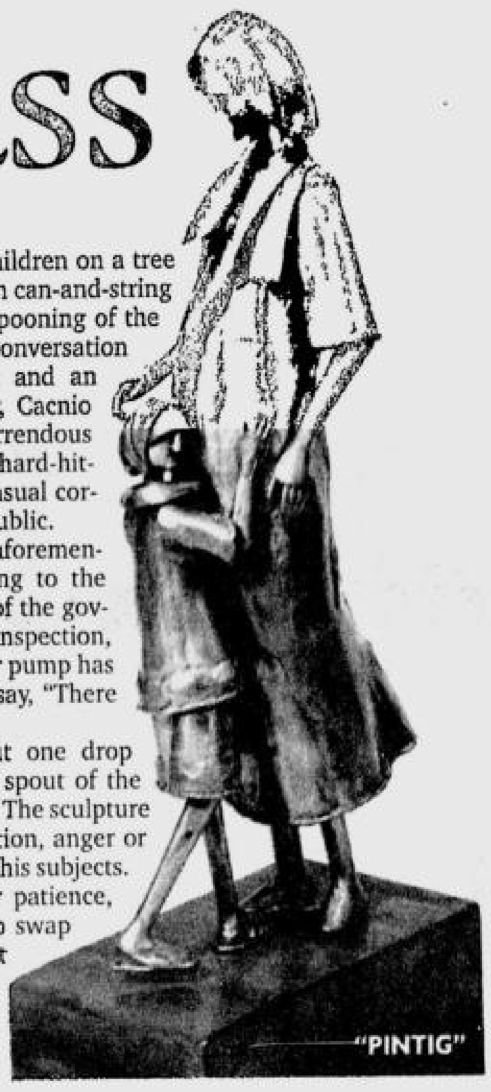
Following these are "Sampay," a woman hanging laundry on a clothesline with the help of her child, and the piece which shows them with the head of the family, on a carabao-drawn cart filled with produce. Then the father is shown pushing swings, with two children this time; and swinging them round, the kids' legs lifted waist-high off the ground.

There are "Patak," the typical line of pail-toting people waiting for their turn at a deep-well pump, and "Pintig," showing a pregnant mother whose older child has one ear close to her swollen belly as if to listen to the heartbeat within.

Social issues

Then there's Cacnio's take on social issues.

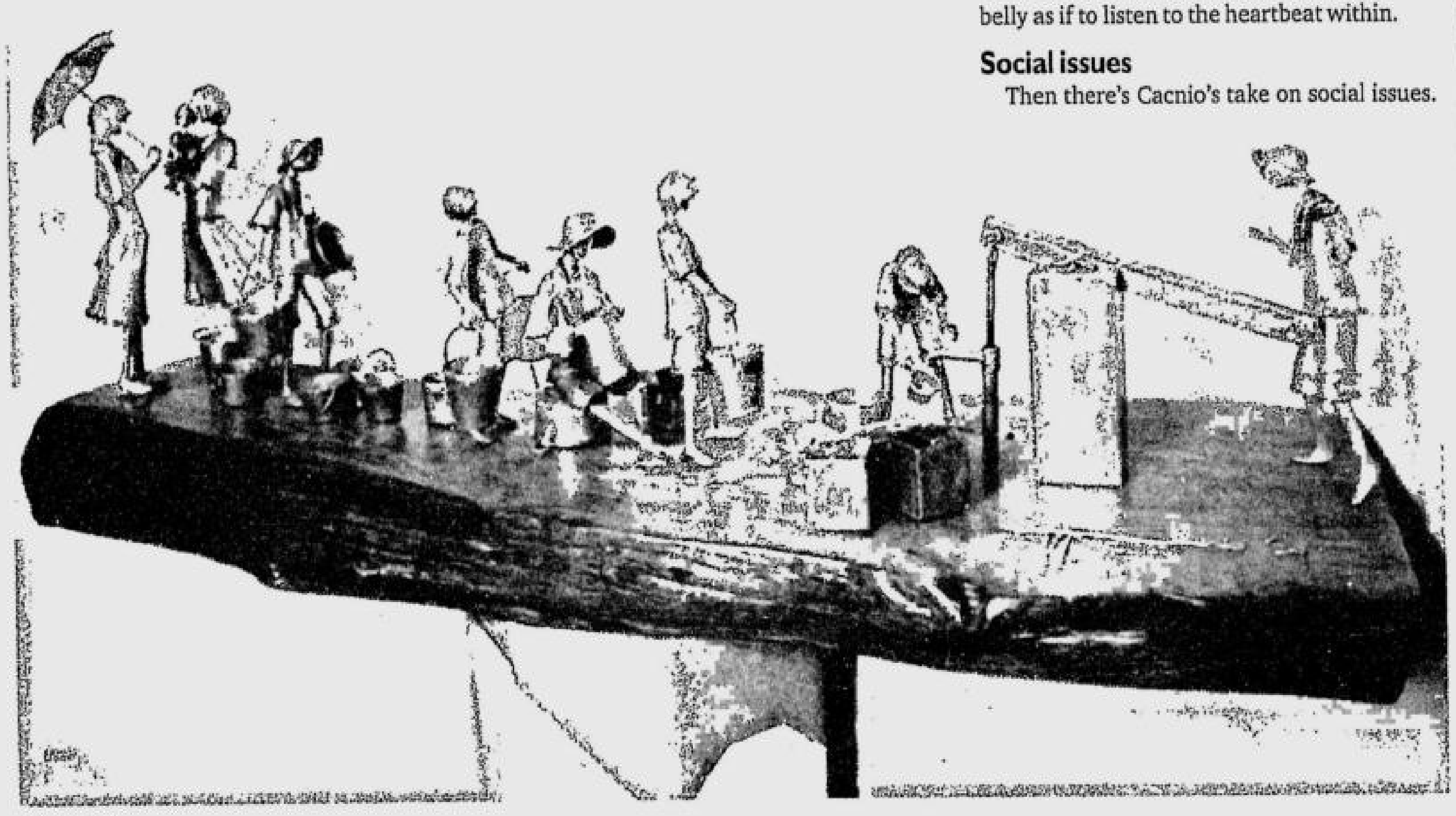
In "Hello Garci," two children on a tree play with a makeshift tin can-and-string "telephone." In his lampooning of the controversial phone conversation between the President and an elections commissioner, Cacnio infuses an otherwise horrendous event with humor. It is hard-hitting in its allusion to casual corruption in a banana republic.


"PINTIG"

A related jibe is the aforementioned "Patak," referring to the banner water projects of the government. Upon closer inspection, the person by the water pump has his palms up, as if to say, "There isn't any."

Indeed, there is but one drop about to fall from the spout of the pump. Again the irony: The sculpture does not imply frustration, anger or dissent in the stance of his subjects. More palpable is their patience, and the opportunity to swap stories during the wait for water, however long.

Even the touching "Pintig" has a social dimension. It may be a comment on the population-control debate. Yet, Cacnio has made sure that the viewer's first sight would be the poignance of maternal love, of fostering sibling bonding with the yet unborn.


"PATAK"

Cacnio said he thought twice about titling "Hello, Garci" into the neutral "Hello, Hello?" He prefers to dwell on the happier aspects of Filipino life, a trait instilled in him by his father, painter Angel Cacnio. But the title he chose has resulted in social commentary without gloominess.

Indeed, Michael Cacnio has carved (or rather, cut, bent and soldered) himself a niche in the industry. For some, his creations appear to be separate slides in 3D stop-motion animation, allowing the viewer to envision the complete movement. Except, of course, the bobbing kite strings and fishing rod lines he is famous for.

While the jointedness that comes with his manner of soldering brass plates together may make one picture the Tin Man's gait, these figures not only have the more curved and streamlined human likeness, they have in them hearts, never having had to search or yearn for one... because Michael Cacnio has infused into them his own.

The young Cacnio has been known for playful but dynamic takes on Filipino scenes

E-mail the author at majorday@gmail.com

Mother and Child book launch set Dec. 17

A RARE AND VALUABLE COLLECTION of Mother and Child paintings and sculptures can now be found in a coffee-table book to be launched on Dec. 17 in Passion Arts Gallery at Metrowalk in Pasig City.

The book, "Different Faces of Mother and Child," is the second in the Collection of Ageless Arts series published by art patron Carlos "Chuckie" Arellano. The first volume, published recently, focused on nudes.

Arellano has continuously struggled to promote the development of art in this country, possessed of a vision that local art might one day serve as an important commodity to be traded by the investing public, which is the practice in many other parts of the world.

Associate publisher and project manager Nola Almario-Cadayona says there will be autograph-signing by the featured artists at cocktails starting at 5:30 p.m.

Featured in the book are works by masters Fabian de la Rosa, Simon Flores, Vicente Manansala, H.R. Ocampo, Cesar Legaspi, Ang Kiukok, and Ricarte Puruganan; contemporary artists Mauro Malang Santos, Manuel Baldemor, Fred Baldemor, Agnes Arellano, Cesar Amorsolo, Ral Arrogante, Buds Convocar, Gene de Loyola, Julius Limpe, Nemiranda, Edsel Moscoso, Elmer Oliva, Rafael Pacheco, Al Perez, Fernando Sena, Palton Varquez, Francisco Verano, Remy Boquiren, Fidel Sarmiento, Salvador Cabrera, William Yu.

The works of "emerging artists" also appear in the book, including those of Michael Austria, Elle, Bayani Acala, Joel Bartolome, Noel Catacutan, Romy Corporal, P. Cuneta Jr., Roland de los Santos, Alberto Malcampo, Lito Milan, Mizel, Rol Obemio, Tony Nuñez, Ed Oronos, Edgardo Parducho, Rishab, Sombrio, Art Zamora.

An added category is the works of artists belonging to the same family, such as the Arcilla-Oliva family, the Baldemors, the Yus, the San Miguels, the Racuya family.

The book's technical consultant is Deo A. Arellano while the book coordinator is Dr. Rachelle A. Cadayona. Text was written by Benjamin Afuang.

Contemporary hand-painted liturgical vestments on exhibit

HAND-PAINTED art lends creativity to priestly fashion.

LITURGICAL artwork

A COLLECTION OF UNIQUE hand-painted liturgical vestments from the "Pari Ko" label depicting various interpretations of the Sto. Niño and the Virgin of Guadalupe are on exhibit in San Agustin Museum at Intramuros.

"Viva! Maria! Viva! Sto. Niño!" is the theme of the exhibit, which will underscore the roles of both Mary and the Infant Jesus in the preservation of life and protection of all children from violence, hunger and exploitation.

The devotions by most Filipinos to the Sto. Niño and the Virgin of Guadalupe date back to the time of the Spanish *conquistadors*. Historian Pigafetta relates that on April 7, 1521, the Augustinian Fathers, escorted by the Spanish soldiers led by Ferdinand Magellan, landed on the shores of Cebu bringing the image of Santo Niño. That marked the beginning of the Christianization of the Philippines.

Images of Our Lady of Guadalupe and the Sto. Niño are delicately hand-painted on polycottons and indigenous fabrics. "Pari Ko" is setting a new trend in liturgical vestments by using beautiful local hand-woven materials. It has also done a collection of vestments with hand-painted images combined with embroidery of Christ, Our Lady and various saints.

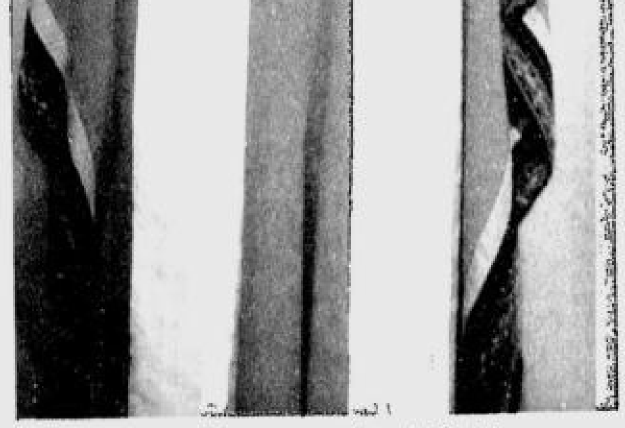
The "Pari Ko" label is an outreach program of B-Zee Marketing Corp. to assist various projects of priests, particularly in poor parishes in the province of Negros.

Aside from vestments, the exhibit also features liturgical vessels and paintings of the Sto. Niño and the Virgin of Guadalupe done by Al Perez, Menchu Arandilla, Waldo Villanueva and Edgar Sumindac.

The exhibit is being organized by Tess Z. Lopez and Jhod Calabig. It runs until Dec. 31.

San Agustin Museum is beside San Agustin Church. Call 7261297.

VESTMENT art is indigenized.


LOCAL colors and forms grace liturgical fashion.

Private gallery opens in Cubao

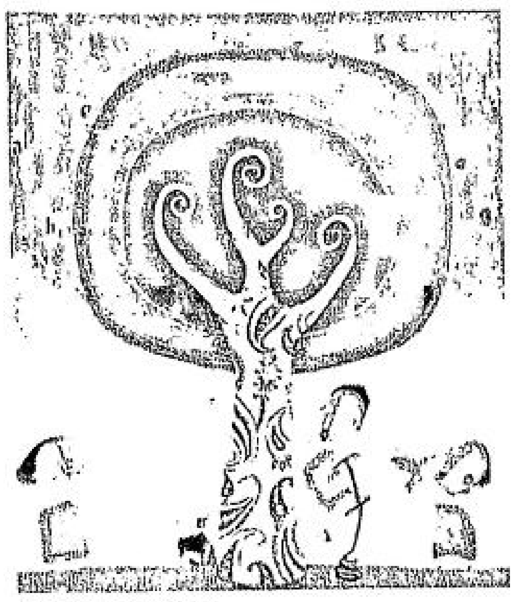
GALLERIE DEANNA, A PRIVATE gallery owned and managed by Nonoy Buncio, will open on Dec. 8 with a small, strictly-by-invitation affair.

The opening also marks the second death anniversary of Deanna Buncio, the owner's only daughter and after whom the gallery is named. The occasion will be a celebration of both her life and Philippine art.

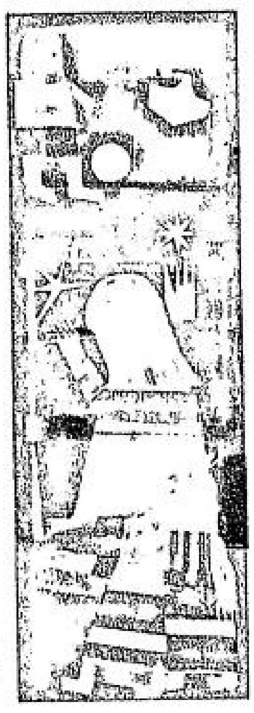
Gallerie Deanna stands on an important site in the history of Philippine modern art. It is located at 3 Saint William St., Immaculate Conception, Cubao, Quezon City, the address of The Philippine Art Gallery in the 1960s, which was founded and formerly run by Lyd Arguilla, the Mother of Modern Art.

Gallerie Deanna boasts a collection of almost 200 works acquired in a span of 38 years. Opening night will unveil works of Filipino Masters such as National Artist Carlos "Botong" Francisco, Vitorio Edades and Vicente Manansala.

Gallerie Deanna's collection may be viewed by appointment by contacting its curator, Nonoy Buncio, at 0919-5884599.

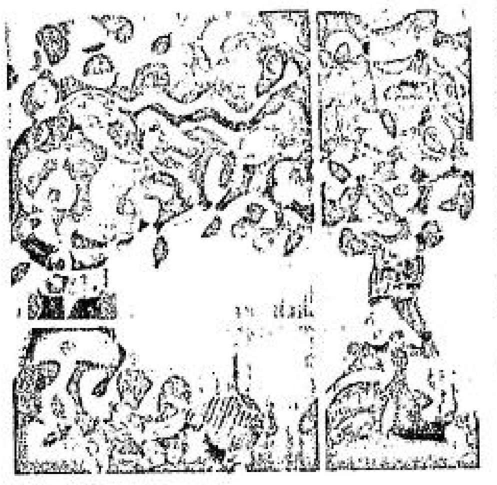


"SPELLBOUND,"
by Farley del Rosario



"PALARO,"
by Romeo Forbes

'Melange' of styles



"SUMMER Dream Triptych," by Tres Roman

"MELANGE" BRINGS together young talents, diverse styles and sheer artistry.

The group show features color-rich renditions of Bin Samonte, Jef Samonte, Tres Roman, Romeo Forbes, Farley del Rosario and Aris Bagtas.

Sure to delight viewers is a range of choices from surreal, naïf, and expressionist pieces. The exhibit runs from Dec. 13-20 at Gallery Nine, 4/F Bldg. A, Megamall. Call 6877302.

IN THEATERS WORLDWIDE DEC. 14
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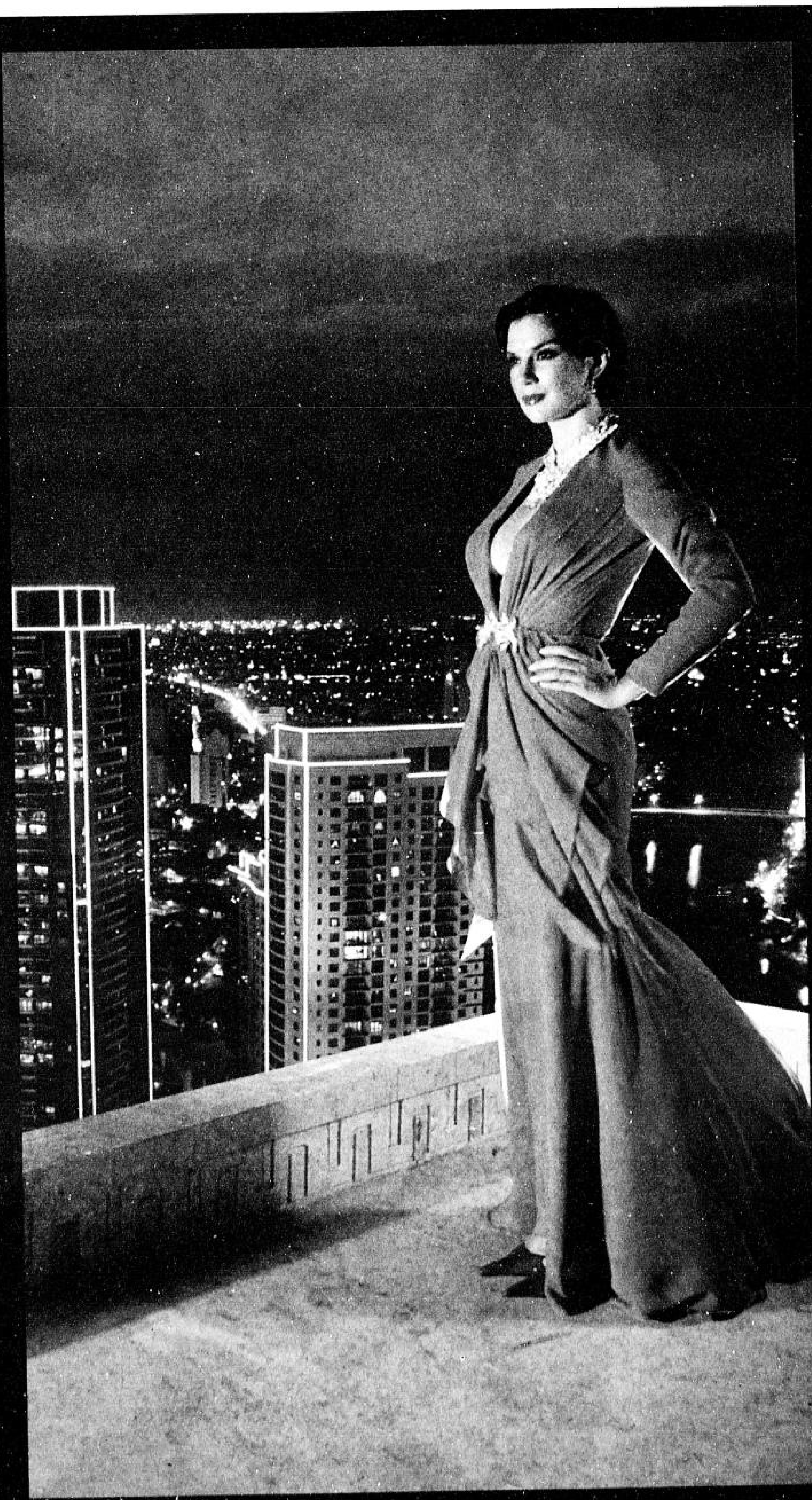

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Champagne Morales
Mariko Jacinto
Crisela Magpayo
Agoo Bengzon
Kim Balza
Kate Toralba
Denise Haak
Ibay Litonjua
Sigalit Djemal
Steff Toh
Ina and Tasha
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They are undoubtedly a notch above the rest, exhibiting an unpretentious style and vibe exclusively their own.

The MotoChic is a fine blend of timeless flamboyance and dynamic, trend-setting hip. She has the unique balance of an iconic beauty and of an edgy pin-up. She exudes a calm and collected bearing that is amplified by her go-getter approach in life.

Three Motorola events recently celebrated the MotoChics' unmatched presence: the rock and groove of the iDJ series; the chic and grace of Fashion Declaration, and the modish demeanor of the Moto PEBL-Shu Uemura Launch.

These events became the white canvass where each MotoChic painted on their unrivaled and indelible colors of panache and pizzazz - RAZR Silver, RAZR Black, RAZR Hot Pink, and the Mysterious Moto PEBL .

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New books show rich tapestry of Philippine heritage

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

TWO NEW BOOKS BRING out diverse aspects that contribute to the rich tapestry of Philippine culture. One is a collection of essays on Manila. The other documents lighthouses built during the Spanish colonial period which stand in solitary, decaying splendor in the farthest outposts of our islands.

Manila is the city I love to hate. It is a city on the brink of self-destruction which eats up anyone who tries to improve it. I impatiently look forward to leaving, and when I do, I always return. I have days of not wanting to have any involvement with it, but in the end I realize I can't have enough of it.

Manila is my karma.

It is David Guerrero's karma as well that he and others wrote "Manila Envelope" (published by Sanserif Inc., and sponsored by the Philippine Daily INQUIRER), a fascinating reality bite of an unreal city, a "compendium of interactions between the tropical dream bubble sitting next to the world's deepest ocean trench and the rich, grey, pinstriped world beyond the seas."

Guerrero's interactors are a potent compendium, indeed: Lourd de Veyra, Krip Yuson, Jessica Zafra, Randy David, Matthias Urban, Ambeth Ocampo, Conrad de Quiros, James Paterson and Uro de la Cruz all write personal and incisive takes on Manila.

Carlos Celdran walks us through the web of intricacies and inconsistencies of Quiapo, from hawker-packed Carriedo sidewalks to Evangelista Street, where you can find magic spells, amulets, charms, and potions that can guarantee your good luck or bad wishes.

He tells you where to buy sparkling beauty-queen tiaras, vegetables, ribbons, baskets, pirated DVDs, before leading you to genteel sanity and history at Bahay Nakpil on Calle Barbosa.

Ige Ramos advises Manila visitors on where

NEW/D2

ISLA Cabra lighthouse in Lubang, Mindoro Oriental (above) and Faro de Cabo Engano lighthouse (left)

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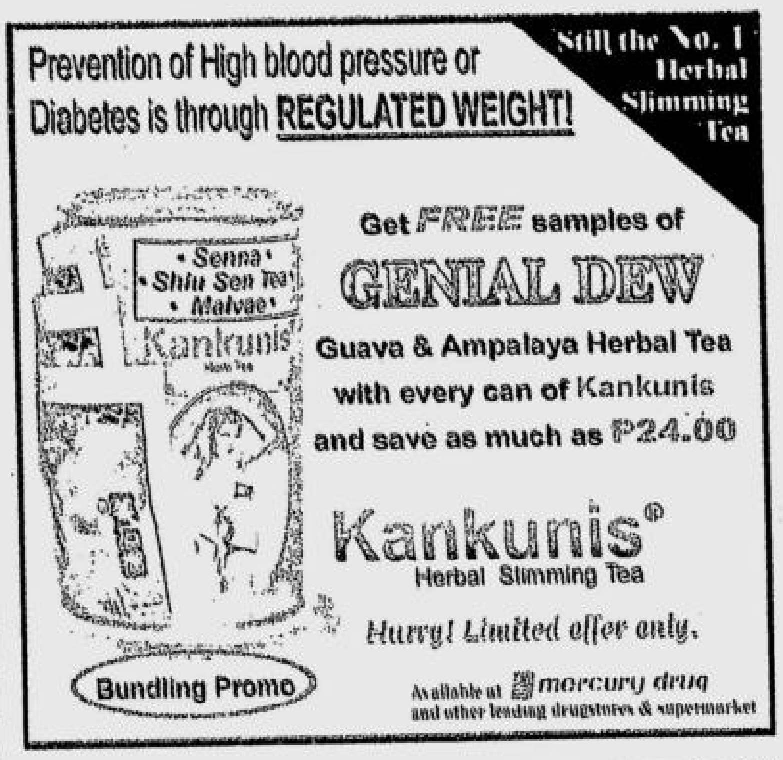

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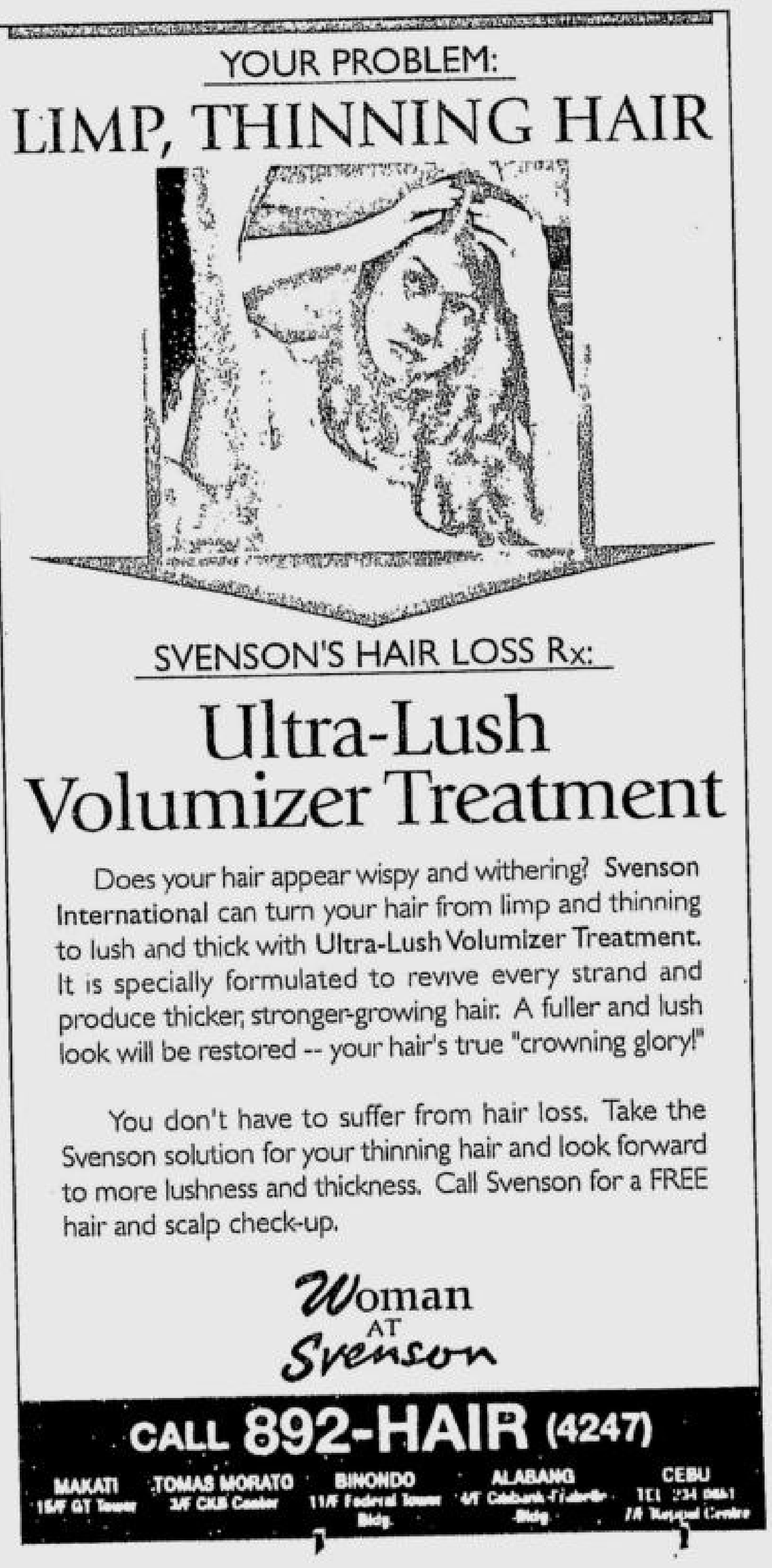

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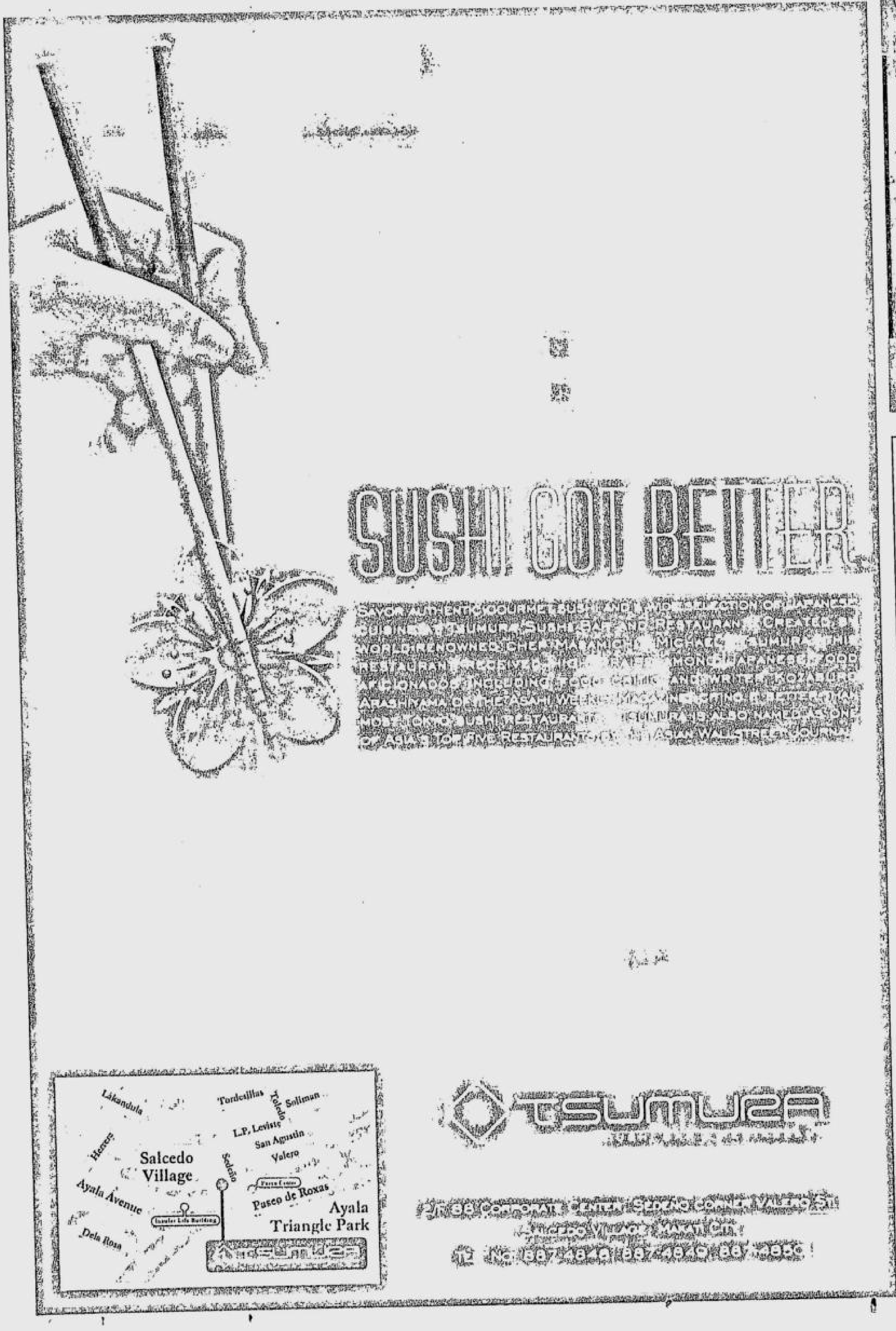

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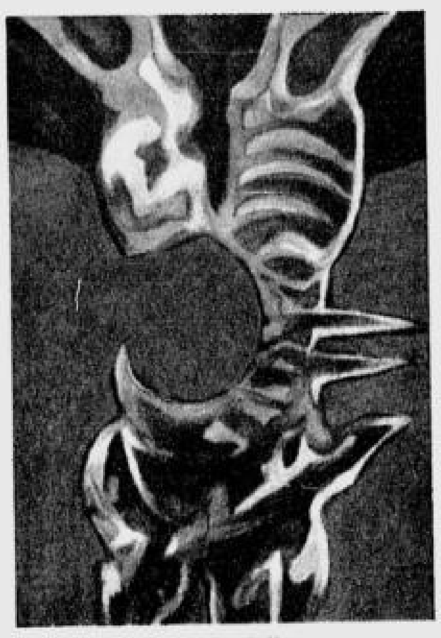
Jose Vinluan Zulueta's 'Aotearoa Series' in New York

VISUAL ARTIST AND PHOTOJOURNALIST Jose Vinluan Zulueta presents his third one-man show, "Aotearoa Series," on Dec. 19 at 6 p.m. at the Philippine Center, 556 Fifth Ave., Manhattan, New York. Invitational cocktail reception will be held on the opening of the exhibit.

"Aotearoa Series" is a collection of 25 paintings in oil and acrylic on canvas. These are the artist's most recent works, following his September 2002 exhibition "Asinta: Images and Imageries."

Aotearoa, which translates to "Land of the Long White Cloud," is New Zealand's indigenous name. The artist has made New Zealand his home since January 2003.

The paintings were inspired by the artist's impressions and reflections of his experiences abroad. These artworks chronicle the artist's emotional journey, culminating in hope and a resolve to overcome. These works have served as the artist's refuge... his sanctuary.



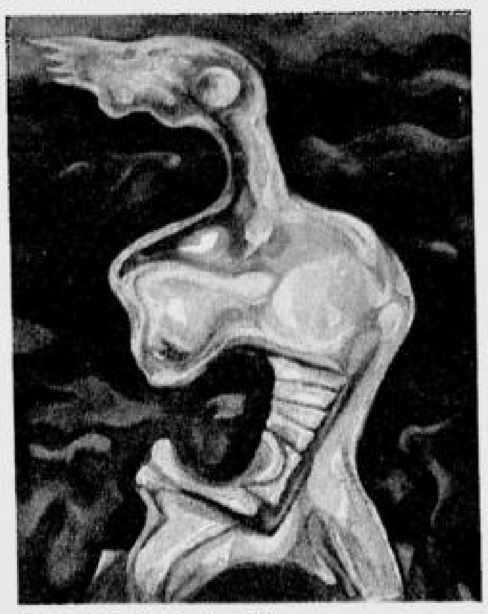
"AOTEAROA Series D"

"At first glance, this series of Zulueta is a terrible discourse on the annihilated self. Man's contorted and sometimes mutilated body perhaps best expresses Zulueta's own sentiments as a migrant Filipino artist. Yet his humanity as a Filipino also seems to urge him into providing spaces for dreams—some literal wings of hope for a future redemption. Zulueta still fervently wishes for man's ultimate salvation from history of violent and violated existence," said National Artist for Literature Virgilio Almario.

Other literary writers and journalists whose commentaries will accompany Zulueta's paintings are Pambansang Makata ng Filipinas Teo Antonio, SEA-Write Awardee Roberto Añonuevo, poet-teacher Rebecca Añonuevo, editor Ariel Dim. Borlongan, performance artist Vim Nadera, poet Marne Kilates, art critic Gino Dormiendo, art curator Susan de Guzman, Philippine Star's Juaniyo Arcellana, Manila Times' Dexter Osorio, ABS-CBN's Leah Salterio, Tempo entertainment editor and Panorama writer Nestor Cuartero, and Manila Bulletin's Ivy Liza Mendoza and Shirley Matias-Pizarro.

Consul General Cecilia Rebong of the Philippines' Consulate General in New York, along with Department of Trade and Industry representative Eugene Reyes and Philippine Center Management Board general manager Gavino Abaya Jr. are guests of honor on opening night.

Before immigrating to New Zealand, Zulueta was an exhibiting artist and worked as news photographer in a major daily newspaper in the Philippines. In September 2002, he launched a successful one-man digital art exhibition and book launch, "Asinta: Images and Imageries," at the RCBC Plaza in Makati City. The exhibition was in collaboration with UP Creative Writing director and TOYM awardee Vim Nadera.



"AOTEAROA Series C"

Zulueta graduated from the College of Architecture and Fine Arts of the University of Santo Tomas, and was a former staff artist of the college newspaper, The Varsitarian.

The New York exhibit runs until Dec. 30. Call (212) 575-4774 and fax (212) 575-3133.

The excitement of young artists

By Constantino C. Tejero

PRODUCTS OF THE UNIVERSITY of the Philippines College of Fine Arts really have this thing for the alternative. It's a rebellious streak that's only reflective of that spirit of revolt which seems to fire every full-blooded UP student. (The State University, of course, is the breeding ground of both avant-gardists and revolutionaries.)

Take Arias (Artists-Run Independent Art Space), at Suite 318 A, L/3, LRI Business Plaza, Nicanor Garcia Street (formerly Reposo), Bel-Air II, Makati City.

The place has the following mission statement: "Arias' primary concern is the development of art and the artists. It provides professional venue for art exhibitions and art events, specifically performance art and new-media works.

"We are promoting regional artists, self-taught artists (with raw vision), emerging artists and mid-career artists. We encourage awareness of ethical and professional artistic practices and proper documentation. We have an art workshop and an international art-exchange project, and we also give advice on art acquisition for collectors and clients."

From the tenor of that message—that familiar voice of independence and anti-establishment stance—we take it that this place is owned or managed by a group of UP artists. (Gallery director, though, is abstractionist Bobby Nuestro, a Philippine Women's University graduate.)

One's hunch is somewhat reinforced when one learns the place is presenting a group of emerging artists who just graduated from UP. These are Carmel Lim (with major in Sculpture); Mervin Malonzo (Painting); Gretchen Flores (Painting); Ona Lapitan (Painting); and Gari Apolonio (Art History).

The five are putting up "Stop Look Listen!" through Dec. 20. These are pieces in oil and acrylic on canvas, watercolor and pen and ink on paper, assorted fabrics.

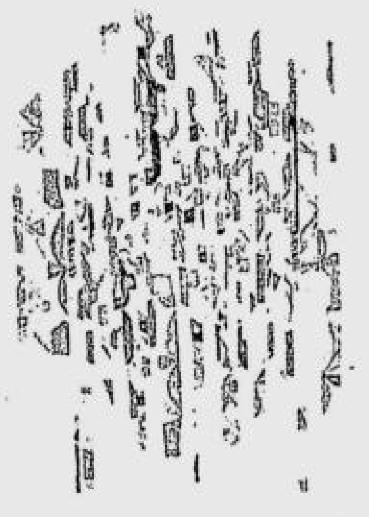
They do not look like works of emerging artists at all. The pattern-making of Lim in her acrylic diptych "Crazy" and "In" is quite intricate, and the line arrangement of Flores in her watercolor collage "After the Rain" is accomplished, they could be creations of professional artists. And that's not mentioning what they can do with color tonalities.

Apolonio's oil "Gridlock" appears to be geometric abstraction at first, until one reads the title and at once sees the multicolor roofs of numerous cars in a traffic jam contained in a broad cross cutting across the canvas. This is a multilayered piece, as one can see it as both top view and front view, and from the realist vantage of a crossroads it even aspires to the metaphor of the cross.

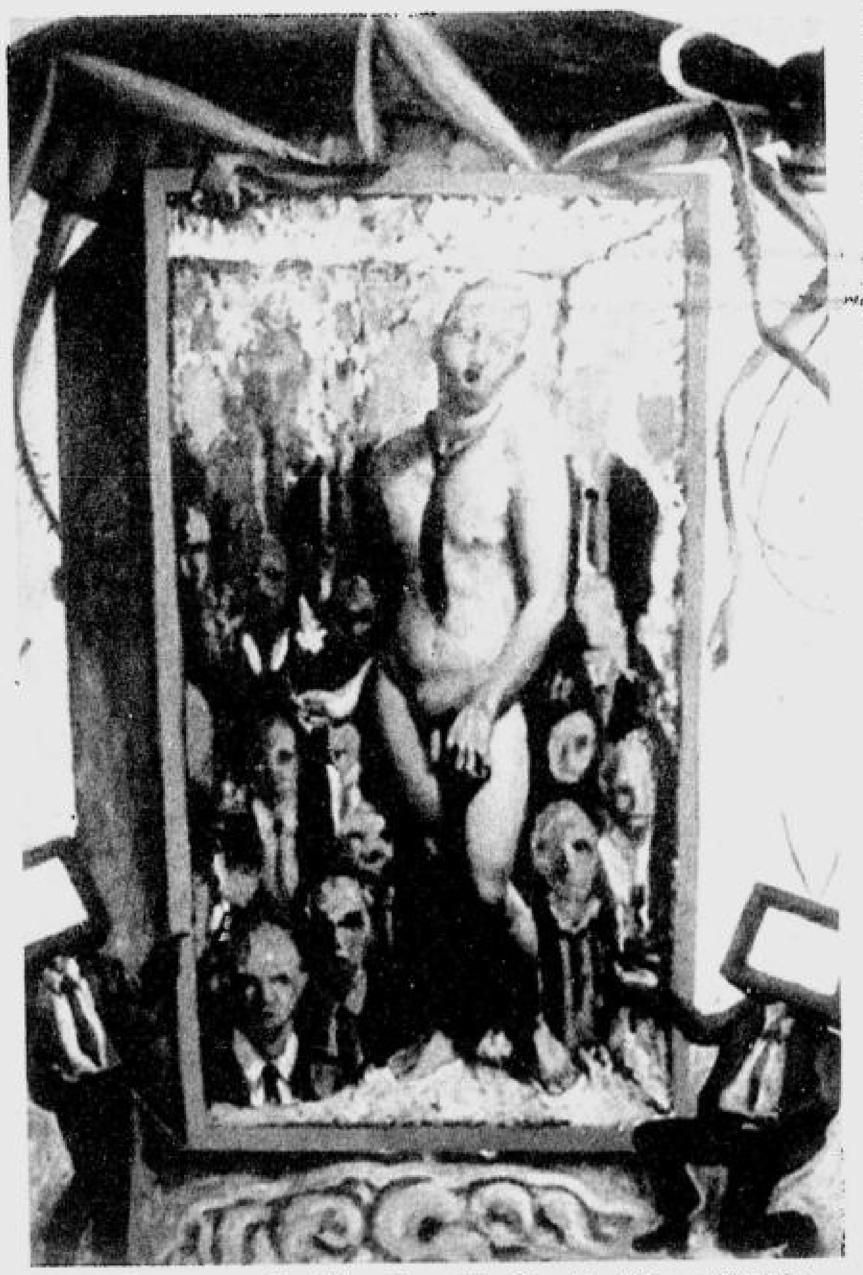
With the experience of urban living as theme, the exhibition's information sheet explains, "the works tackle a variety of subjects such as isolation, survival and motivation as these depict the physical as well as the psychological realities of urban life."

The young artists confront the Big City as if in mortal combat: "Apolonio tackles physical and personal spaces and the highs and lows of being and feeling crowded. Flores gets sentimental about Nature and shows how aware she

THE EXCITEMENT/ D3



"AFTER the Rain," by Gretchen Flores



"WHAT Happens to a Man When Everything Goes Very Wrong Which It Often Does," by Mervin Malonzo

In the name of the father, the son and kindred artistic spirits

By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor

THE FATHER-AND-SON TANDEM OF Renato and Guerrero Habulan could not have chosen a more auspicious time to hold their first-ever show together.

While the elder Habulan, a pioneering SR stalwart, had been preoccupied with his mentoring classes, the son went back to school (UP Fine Arts), winning various art competitions along the way, honing his gifts, and, with little interference from the father, finally coming into his own.

The Habulans have come up with "Karambola" at The Big & Small Art (until Dec. 21), which exposes the Pinoy character's overarching need for instant relief and gratification and penchant for games of chance.

The word *karambola* alludes to the unknown directions that the trajectory of fate may take. As befits eclecticism, there is a sense of *karambola* in the show's freewheeling exploration of subject, material and processes.

Thus, both father and son have literally gone to town with a wide range of works in various media, delving into a wide spectrum of subjects—portraits of kin and kindred, and strangers as well—unleashing an array of techniques that defies traditional and tried-and-tested modes of art-making.

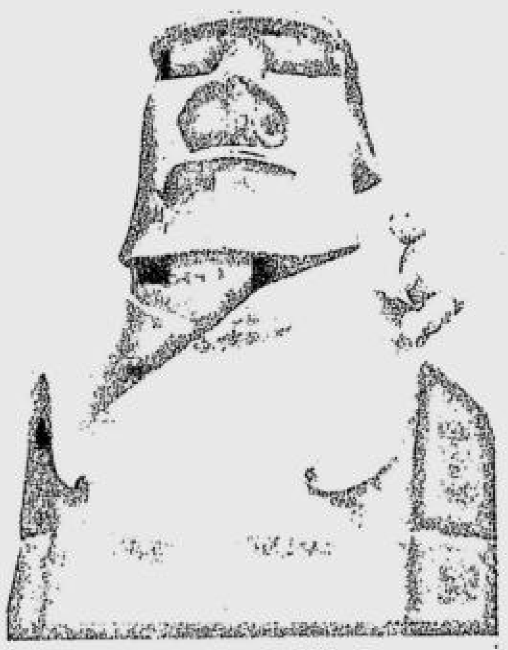
Though both have remained partial to the figurative genre, they leave ample room for abstraction in their works, as well as experimenting with mixed media such as polymer and modeling paste, achieving an artistic hybrid of sorts.

The elder Habulan has well over a hundred pieces in square modes, similar to his Arkuiris boxes, relatively small in dimension, the majority of which combine oil on canvas, showing anatomical configurations in varied dramatic poses, portraits of his family, as well as abstractions in monochrome with their horizontal-vertical dialogue.

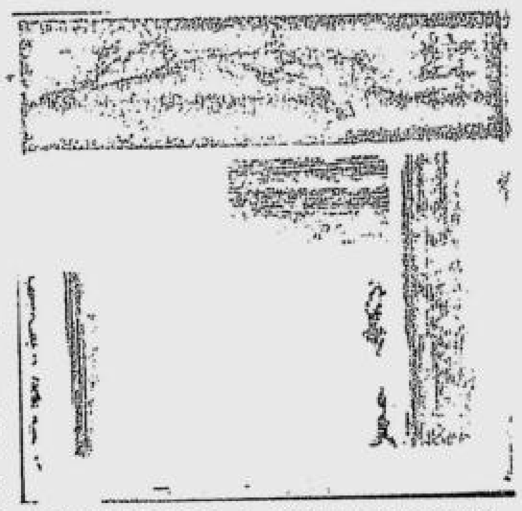
He further pushes his experimentation with a number of sculptures using modeling paste, which he chose to mount on frames.

This is, to be sure, Guerrero Habulan's coming-out show, a supremely gifted portraitist who paints the lowly denizens he encounters in the streets every day, from ambulant vendors to nondescript waifs roaming the urban jungle.

With his brand of verisimilitude, the 25-year-old Habulan is clearly enamored with Pop Art and pop culture, evident in his large work, "Sa'n Ka Tataya?" With its tableau of marginalized characters framed by the logo of a popular alcoholic drink, the painting envisions the supreme battle between good and evil being waged every day, with their set of losers and winners like those in a game show on the boob tube.



"ME & MY Easter Island Pal," by Peter Sutcliffe



"KARAMBOLA Series" (Guhit at Hugis #3), by Renato Habulan

This is a show that has been propelled by the artists' belief in the primacy of art in life. With a number of equally gifted father-and-son artists at work today, from the Olazos and the Parials to the Delacruzes (Fil and Janos), the Habulans have become a shining example of the fraternal bonding that makes art doubly meaningful, twice pleasurable.

Habulan students

In the group show "Still Life: A Celebration," the former acolytes of Renato Habulan have banded together to exhibit their recent works in the genre. The four—Mel Cabriana, Habulan's scholar; Manuel Tuason, a doctor and radiologist; Peter Sutcliffe, a British-born journalist formerly connected with the International La-

IN THE NAME/ D3

New books show rich tapestry of Philippine heritage

From page D1

to find bed-and-breakfast. His quick eye spots the gold-plated spittoons on the floor of the once venerable Manila Hotel, evidence of the Grand Dame's shaky taste origins.

To experience the bizarre, Ige says, go to the Manila North Cemetery to see the homeless living illegally in opulent mausoleums for the dead. Go to Intramuros. Visit the National and Metropolitan Museums, but don't miss the Marikina Shoe Museum where the non-skeletal contents of Imelda's closets are laid out in rows of glass cabinets.

Feast in Manila. Cuisine is at its best in upscale Makati, on gentrified Adriatico and Nakpil Streets in Ermita. Find comfort Chinese food in Carvajal Tea House at Binondo. To really taste the pulse of the city, street food is where to find it.

"Manila Envelope" takes an insightful look at Manila, but since the city is the microcosm of the country, it is an insight into Philippine psyche. Through this book our eyes open to see what Philippine culture is today.

Lighthouses of heritage

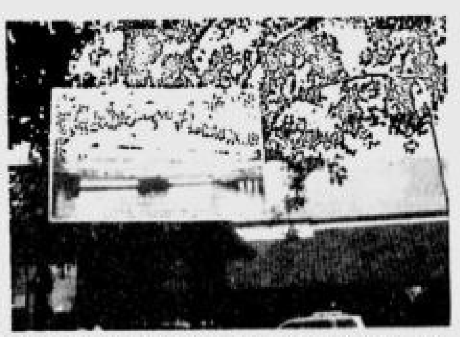
If "Manila Envelope" is an expression of the collective karma of the authors, so is "Lonely Sentinels of the Sea," written by architect and architectural historian Manuel Maximo López del Castillo-Noche and published by the University of Santo Tomas Publishing House.

Lighthouses obsess Manolo Noche. He spends his hours thinking about them while in Manila teaching at UST. When he is not there, he is usually found in a desolate island outpost, researching, measuring and documenting a lighthouse. The photographs overwhelm.

Everything there is to know about Philippine lighthouses from the Spanish colonial period, Manolo knows. His search continues.

Noche journeys to lighthouses in faroff points like Isla de Palaui in Cagayan province, Bojeador at the tip of Ilocos Norte, Isla de Capones in Zambales, Lubang in Mindoro, Isla Bagatao in Sorsogon, Islote de Manigonigo in Iloilo, the Farola in Manila, and other places at the farthest reaches of the Philippine archipelago.

Manolo tells us that vessels navigated all over the globe aided by lighthouses, and when they entered Philippine waters, our system took over the navigational responsibility.



BILLBOARD nailed by Jumbo Kingdom resto to a live, mature tree on Roxas Blvd.

Lighthouses are classified by their importance, according to "orders" or size, and the power of the light as magnified by the complex lenses and prisms. There are six orders, with the first providing navigational aid for international vessels entering or leaving Philippine waters. Orders diminish in importance until the sixth order which provides assistance for ports and harbors.

"Lonely Sentinels of the Sea" will be launched at the Filipinas Heritage Library on Makati Avenue on Dec. 13 at 6 p.m. The launching is organized by the UST Center for Intercultural Studies and Toward a Common Future, the program for cultural cooperation of the Kingdom of Spain's Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports.

The strength of these two publications is in the total commitment of the authors to their passions which open up new perspectives that add to the sadly misunderstood picture of Philippine culture and lifestyle that exists today.

At this troubled juncture in Philippine history, when each Filipino needs to rediscover the cultural uniqueness and excellence of his nation, these books show the Philippines that many Filipinos think so little of.

What both books do is reaffirm our missing pride of place.

These are books to have. They are available now at the Filipinas Heritage Library on Makati Avenue and major bookshops in Manila.

Heritage watch

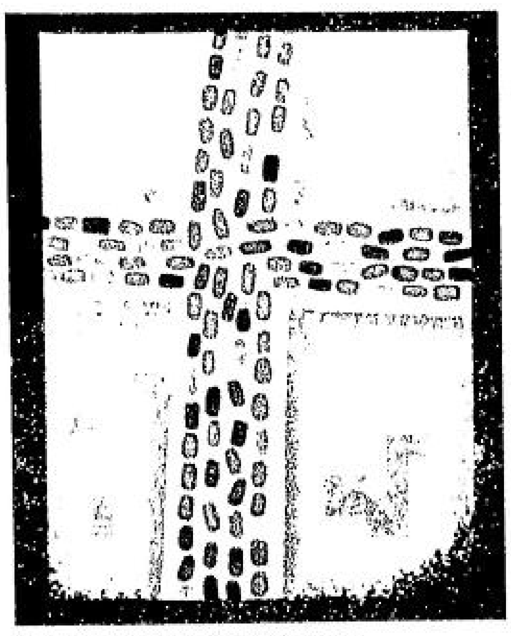
The Philippines now leads an international museum association, proof of international respect earned by local professionals in the highly competitive museums field.

Director Corazón S. Alvina of the National Museum of the Philippines has assumed chairmanship of the Asia-Europe Museum Network (Asemus), an organization of 60 museums in Asia and Europe committed to sharing of museum collections and professional competence among its members.

A forum discussing each museum's responsibilities toward their respective collections was recently held at the National Museum with participation of the directors of the Asian Civilizations Museum (Singapore), Musée du Quai Branly (Paris), and the British Museum (London).

In the spirit of Asemus cooperation, the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden (Netherlands) loaned some Philippine objects from its collection for the exhibition "Pang-ulo" now on view at the Museum of the Filipino People. The exhibition should not to be missed.

E-mail the author at afvillalon@hotmail.com



"GRIDLOCK," by Gari Apolonio

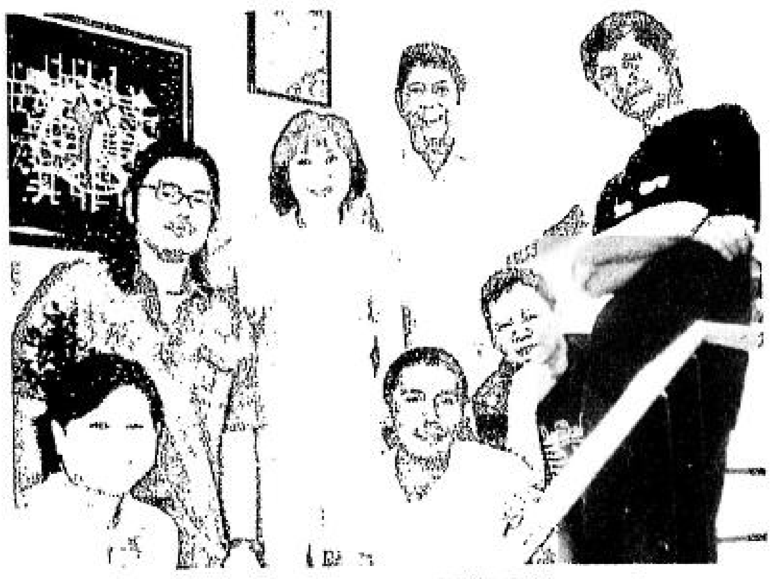
The excitement

From page D2

is of the difference between the city and the countryside in terms of greenery and natural landscapes. Lapitan dreams about the day when she won't have to worry about survival and basic necessities. Lin dwells on the virtue of persistence, a trait she deems one of the most important in order to succeed in the city. Malonzo expresses his enmity toward the media, distaste for bourgeois hypocrisy, and a wish to manage his time more efficiently."

As young artists often do, the five have found ways to transform dull reality into exciting art, in the process squeezing novel images and fresh ideas out of the commonplace. We can appreciate that, even without that rather high-minded explanation.

The emergence of these fine artists reminds us of two groups of like-minded rebel artists in the last decade: Salingpusa and Surrounded by Water. These two also emerged from UP.



MEMBERS of the Arte Pintura Group: Addie Cukingnan, Azor Pazcoguin, Betty Luz Chua, Rey Aurelio, Rey Ademis, Tony Yusi and Abelardo Pasigado

Cosio at . . .

From page D4

orate its 111th anniversary in the country. The exhibit will be held at the Enterprise Center, Tower 2 Lobby, Paseo de Roxas and Ayala Ave, Makati City. Call 8499888.

THE *BULUL* or rice god of the Ifugao of the Cordilleras is one of the most sought-after artifacts in the tribal art world. Today, an exhibit-sale will be held featuring 20 pieces of rare, collection-grade and museum-quality Ifugao rice gods, ranging from archaic examples to early 20th century Tagiling-type pieces. The exhibit-sale will be held at the Narra/Palm Room of the Mandarin Oriental Manila, from 1-6 p.m. These rice gods will be offered to individuals as well as institutional collectors. Call 7527317.

"PODER: The Cult of President," an exhibit of the portraits of presidents of the Philippines, is on view until March 1, 2006, at the Museum of the Filipino People. Call 5271215, 5270278 or 5243005.

In the name of the father . . .

From page D2

bor Organization; and Molly Yap, a housewife who has taken up painting for seven years—have come into their own, evolving in time with an idiosyncratic style finely honed by their dedicated mentor.

The youngest of the four, Cabriana, who initially took up Industrial Technology, is a fervid disciple of photo-realism, as espoused by Andrew Wyeth, and prefers to paint discarded objects caught in the minutiae of nature. These scenes show an uncanny eye for capturing detail even as he transforms the mundane and the banal into a thing of beauty.

Tuason, equally adept in the realistic genre, has painted architectural details in the latticework used in columns and posts of ancestral houses. Trained as a doctor, Tuason invariably focuses on the contrasting characters of objects that the ordinary eye would not have otherwise noticed.

Sutcliffe, who has lived and worked in five continents before retiring in the country with his Filipino wife, has painted "Edward Bear's Magical Tour," an icon from his childhood, where he takes the viewer to the British Museum, the National Archaeological Museum in Athens, to the Bargello Museum in Florence, and finally to a 10th-century Hindu temple at Khajuro, Central India, with the celestial nymph Sura-sundari.

Juxtaposing the artifacts of history with museum figures and the toy clambering at their side, Sutcliffe attempts to link two cultures and generations, and infusing Pop Art sensibilities to his otherwise reverential treatment to figures he had seen in his journeys around the globe.

The works of Molly Yap, a housewife from Singapore whose love for the art was rekindled by her mentor, recall those of Araceli Dans and Tessie Duldulao, with their obsession for the *callado*, the indigenous fabric from *jusi*. But Yap is more concerned with the painstaking process that goes with painting lace, cutwork and embroidery as revealed in her truly delicate subjects. It is the artist's way of linking the glorious past with the modern era, characterized by the pursuit of identity in a world threatened by globalization.

This show is thus a fitting testament to their mentor, under whose guidance and inspiration the door has swung open to more exciting discoveries, as they each seek to find their rightful place in the burgeoning art world.

E-mail the author at gdormiendo@yahoo.com

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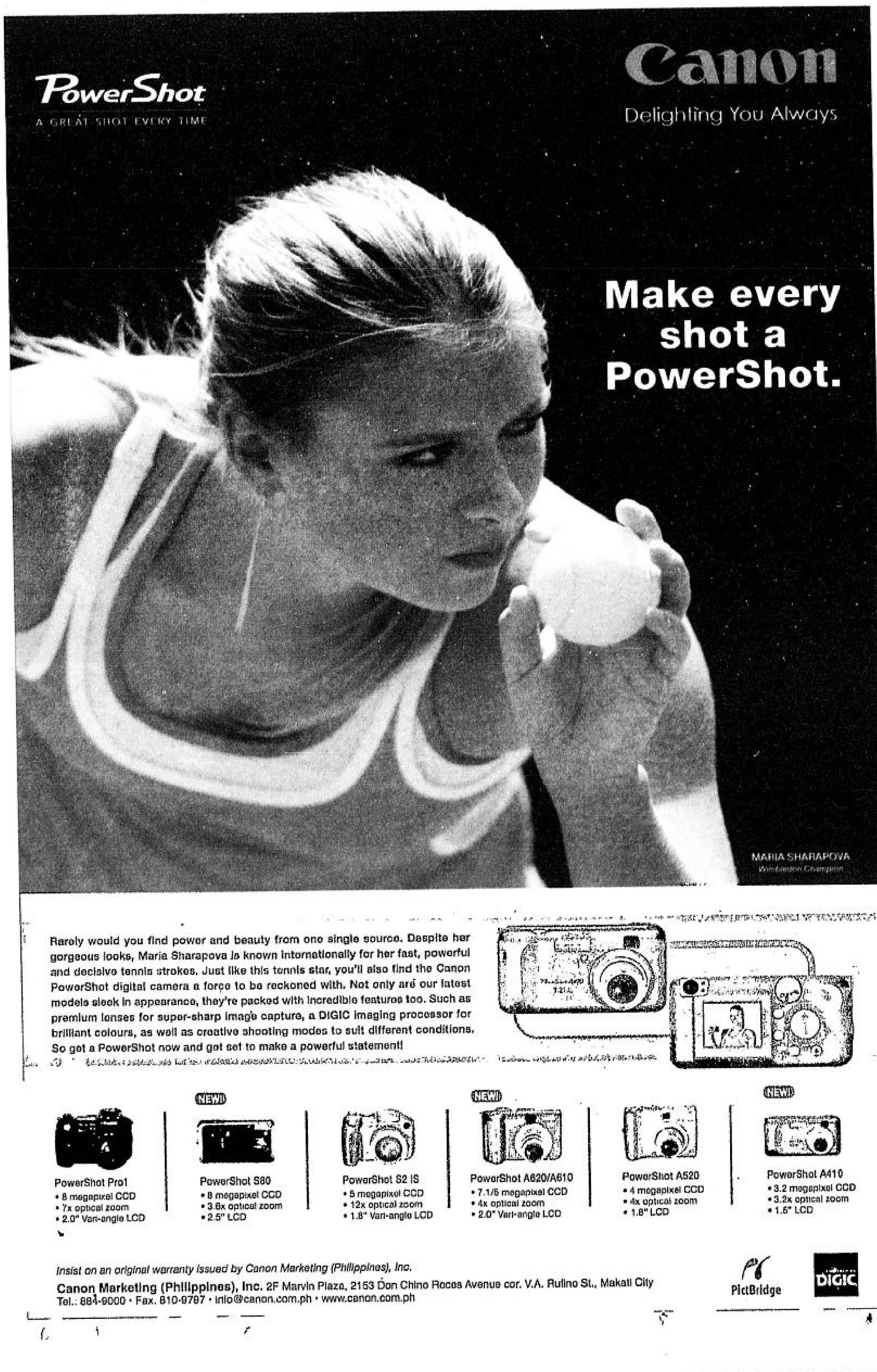

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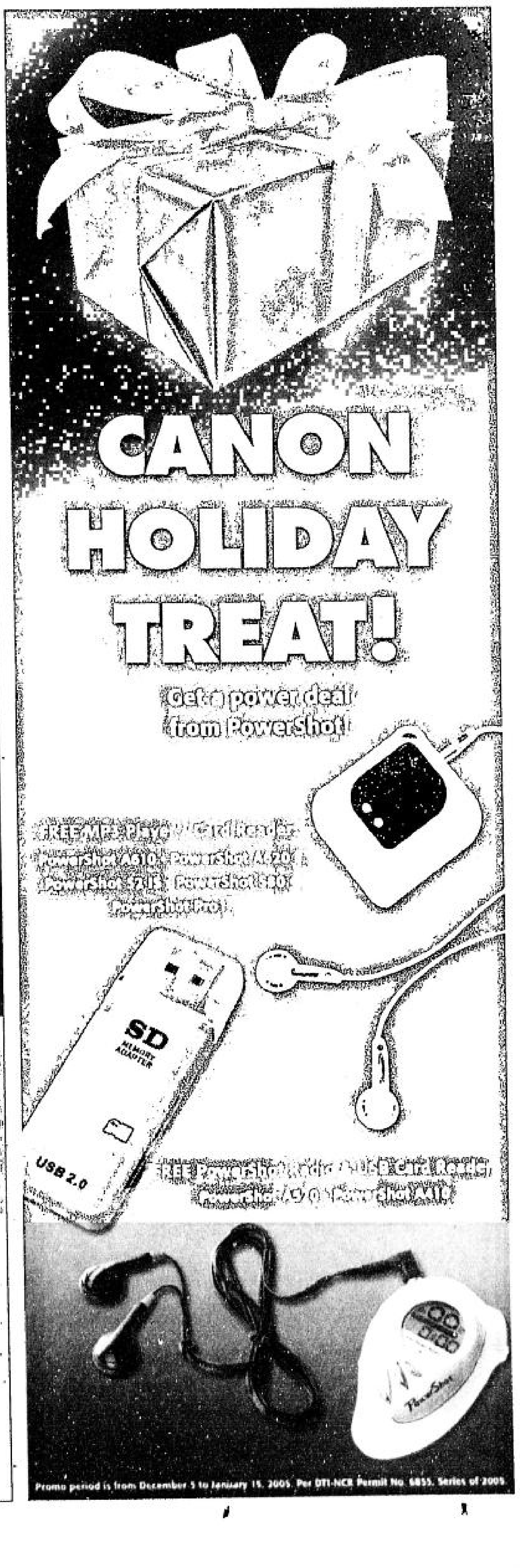

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Promo period is from December 5 to January 15, 2005. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 6855, Series of 2005.

Cosio at Le Souffle, Santos at Mag:Net, Cadag at Asia Art

ÀLLAN COSIO MOUNTS AN EXHIBIT OF LARGE-scale landscape paintings at Le Soufflé, Amorsolo Drive, Rockwell Center, Makati City, Dec. 14-Jan. 10, 2006.

BRICCIO Santos presents small abstract works in acrylic on paper in "Marginals," the artist's latest one-man exhibition in Mag:net Gallery, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City, Dec. 14-Jan. 3, 2006. "Marginals" presents what Santos prefers to call "spiritual clutter," where the process of "allowing the subconscious to emanate" is privileged. It presents an array of seemingly interwoven yet anarchic forms, connected through their population of common spaces. Call 8177895 or e-mail magnetcafekatips@yahoo.com.

LILY Avila-Wuzela holds "Flores Et Femina" (Flowers and Women), Dec. 15-26 at the Rockwell Club Lobby, 25 Amorsolo Drive, Rockwell Center, Makati City. Avila-Wuzela's canvases display her penchant for spontaneous colors which spring from her moods. Her color paints are the sounding boards of her emotions and impulses.

VISUAL ARTS

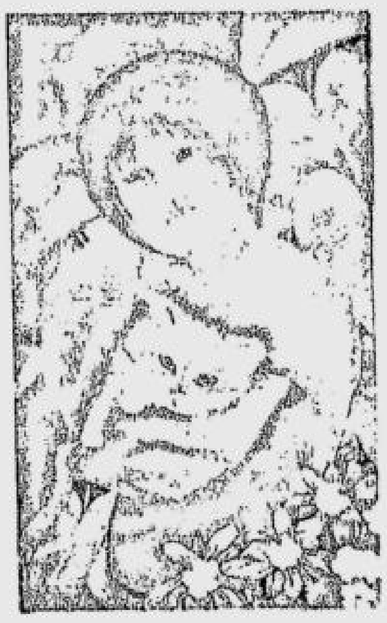
THE GROUP exhibit dubbed "Cream of the Crop" in Heritage Art Gallery, Building A, 4/F, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City, runs until Dec. 31. Featured artists are José Joya, H.R. Ocampo, Tabuena, Vitalis, Ang Kiukok, Zalameda, Arturo Luz, Alcuaz, Bencab, Angel Cacnio, Lamarroza, Al Perez, Rene Robles, Ton Raymundo and Ferdie Cacnio.

THE ARTE Pintura Group presents a Christmas exhibit for the benefit of Gawad Kalinga. The exhibit will be held in Gallery Hues, MC Depot, The Fort, Taguig, Dec. 16-31. Featured artists are Rey Ademis, Rey Aurelio, Betty Luz Chua, Addie Cukingnan, Nena Frondoso, Abelardo Pasigado, Azor Pazcoguin, Debbie Ann Tan, Shirley Tan and Tony Yusi.

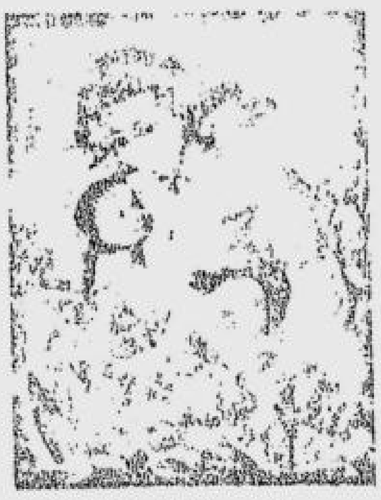
YASMIN Almonte presents "Talambuhay" in Liongoren Gallery, 111 New York St., Cubao, QC, until Dec. 22. The show features mixed-media works composed of found objects, conjuring a melange of images where the secular and the religious, autobiographical and iconographic converge. The exhibit offers a glimpse of the artist's forays into different media and narratives. Call 9124319 and 4393962.

SUN Life Financial-Philippines and the Camera Club of the Philippines present a photo exhibit "Seasons of the Sun, Seasons of Life," Dec. 12-16. The exhibit is a preview of the grand celebration the country will mount in 2006 to commem-

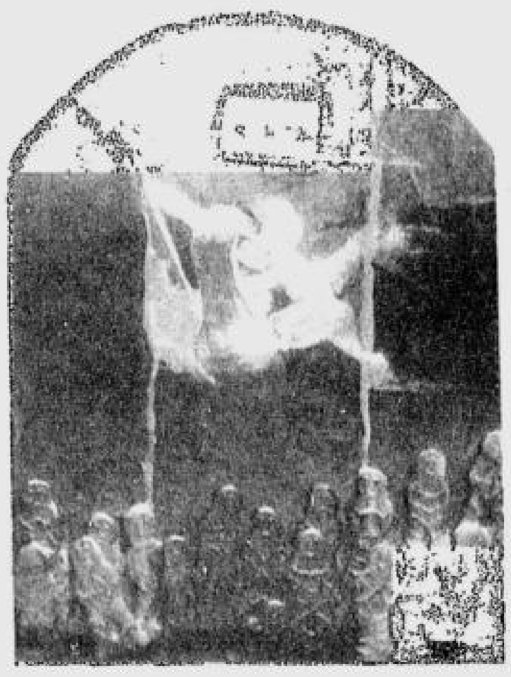
COSIO/ D3



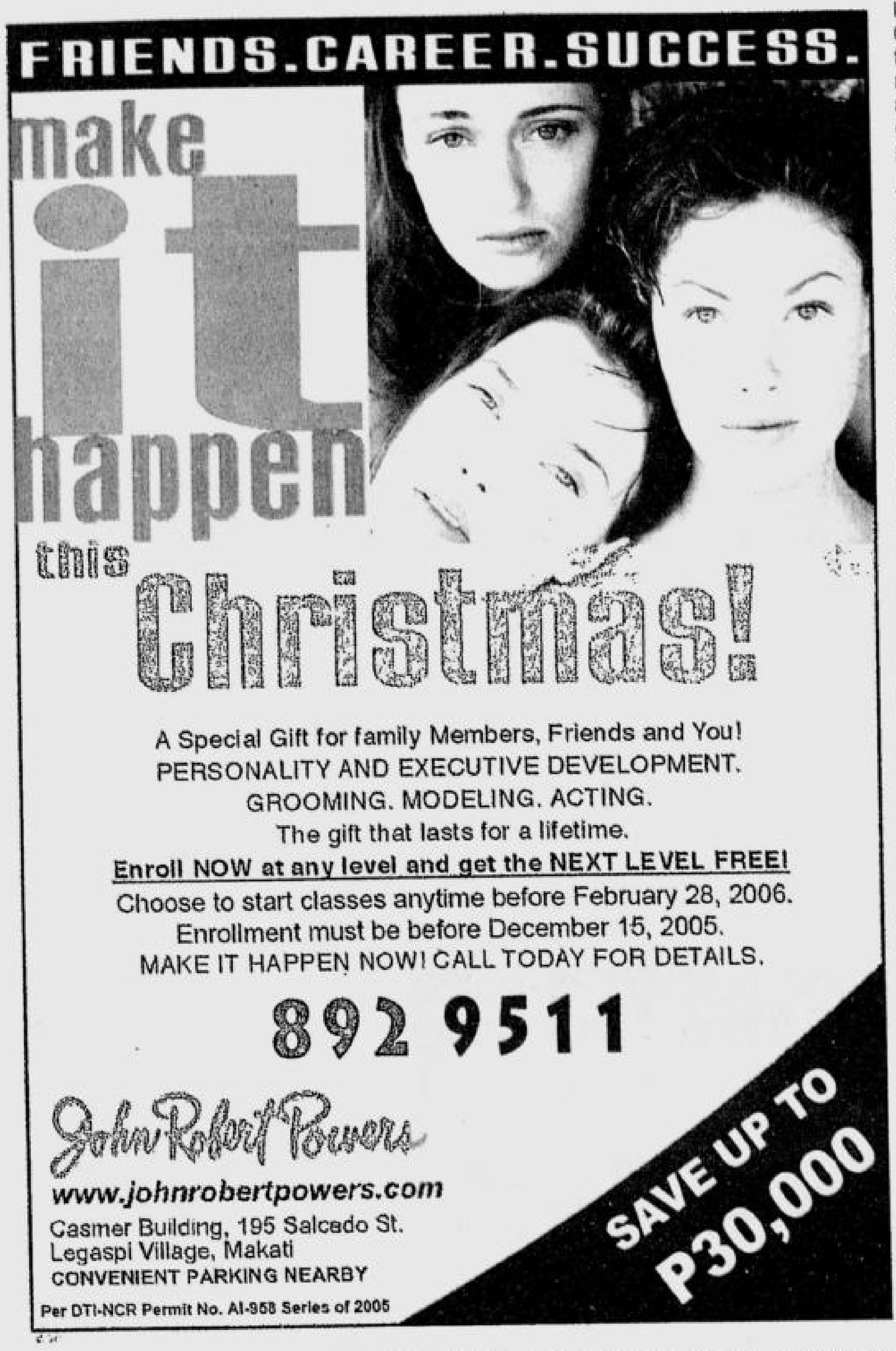
"SI NINGNING," by Addie Cukingnan



"DAMPI" by William Cadag



"WALANG Wakas," by Yasmin Almonte



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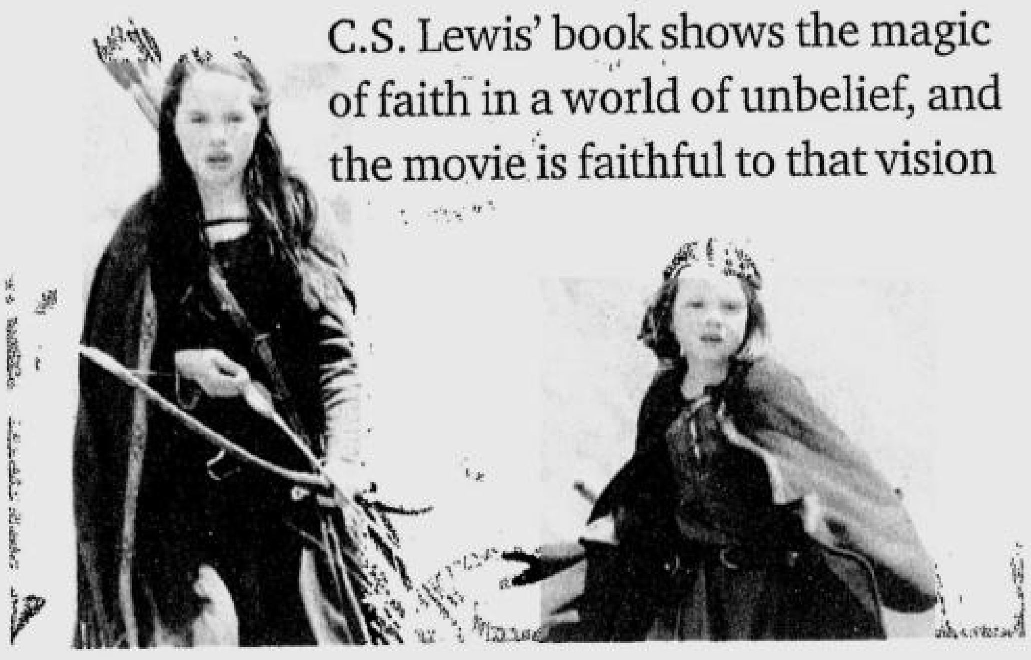


C.S. Lewis' book shows the magic of faith in a world of unbelief, and the movie is faithful to that vision

FROM BOOK TO FILM

'Narnia' gets magical 'Wardrobe' change

By Eldric Paul Peredo
Contributor

REALITY IS BOUNDLESS WHEN IMAGINATION and belief are given free reign, and not even a world war can prevent the amazing stories of a magical land behind the wardrobe door.

ASLAN, great lord of Narnia

This, in a very inadequate sentence, is the story of C.S. Lewis' much-loved tale of the Kingdom of Narnia, immortalized in the timeless fable, "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe."

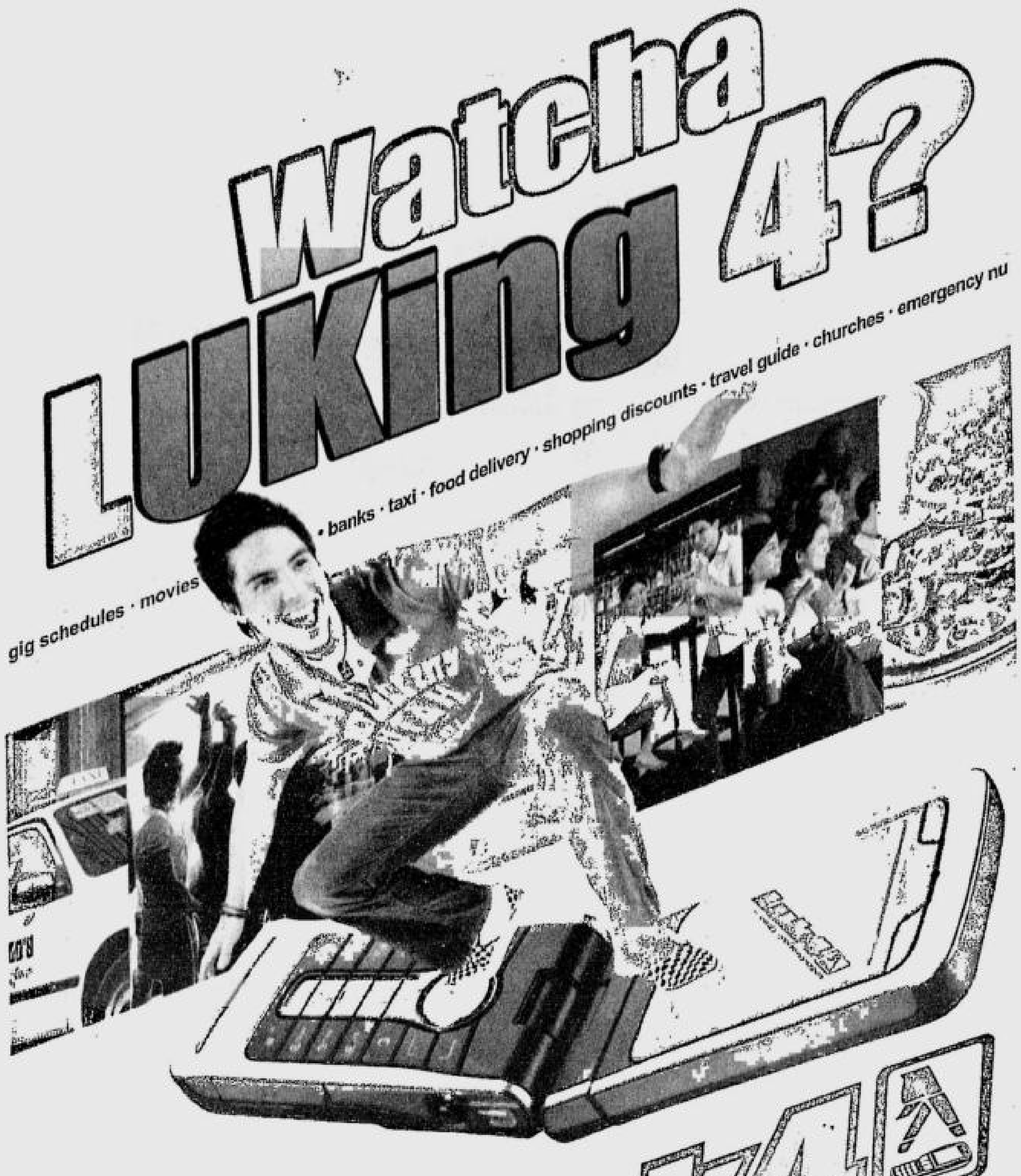
Inadequate, because Lewis' story was never meant to be limited by definitions, so much so that it does not only cater to children being tucked into bed, but people of all ages, with the ageless themes of the battle between good and evil, stubborn faith in a better world, and the undying courage to struggle toward it.

Any person familiar with the literary classic would attest that its brilliance lies in the way it is told. Narnia becomes a sanctuary from a war-ravaged England when young Lucy Pevensie steps into a curious wardrobe in her guardian's countryside mansion and accidentally finds the magical place she could previously only imagine.

It is not long before her siblings—Peter, Susan, and Edmund—also find themselves through the wardrobe while hiding from the mansion's stern caretaker. Their magical adventures start from there, and the possibilities seem endless.

But Narnia, for all its wonderful snowy landscapes and talking animals, is not a happy place, as the winter is actually a hundred-year-old curse. The snowy land is not the idyllic picture it so readily presents; it has been frozen to unfeel-

'NARNIA'/E3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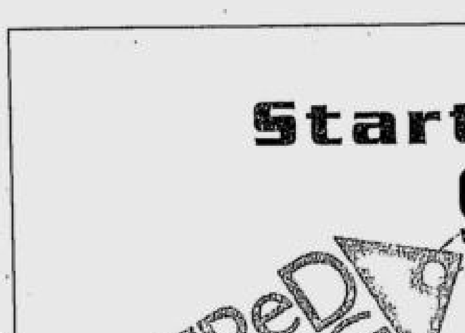

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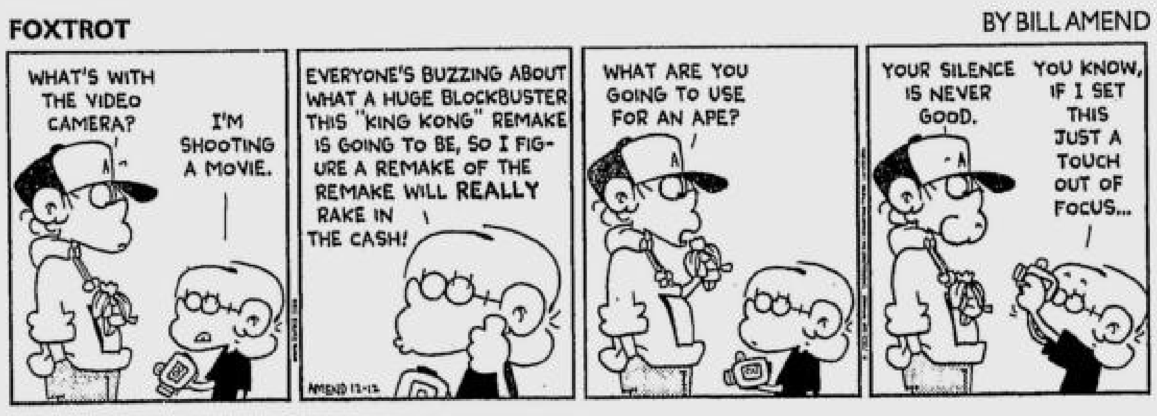
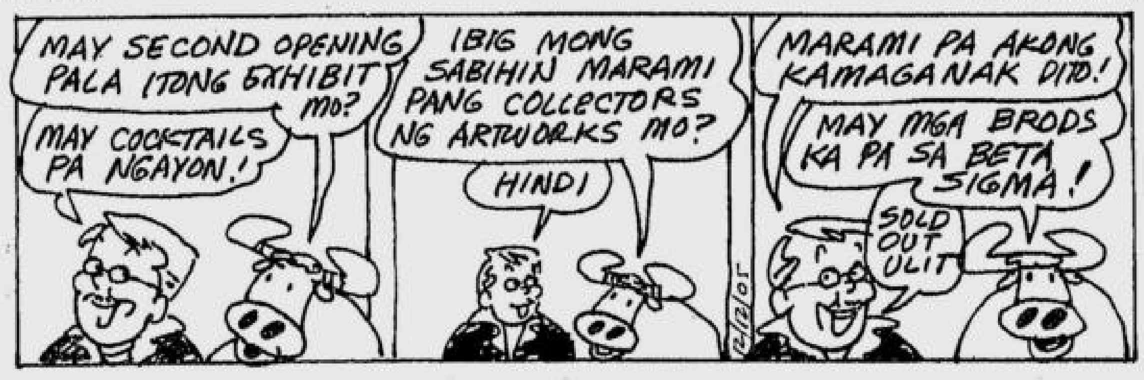
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


WHAT'S WITH THE VIDEO CAMERA?
I'M SHOOTING A MOVIE.
EVERYONE'S BUZZING ABOUT WHAT A HUGE BLOCKBUSTER THIS "KING KONG" REMAKE IS GOING TO BE, SO I FIGURE A REMAKE OF THE REMAKE WILL REALLY RAKE IN THE CASH!
AMEND 12-12
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO USE FOR AN APE?
YOUR SILENCE IS NEVER GOOD.
YOU KNOW, IF I SET THIS JUST A TOUCH OUT OF FOCUS...

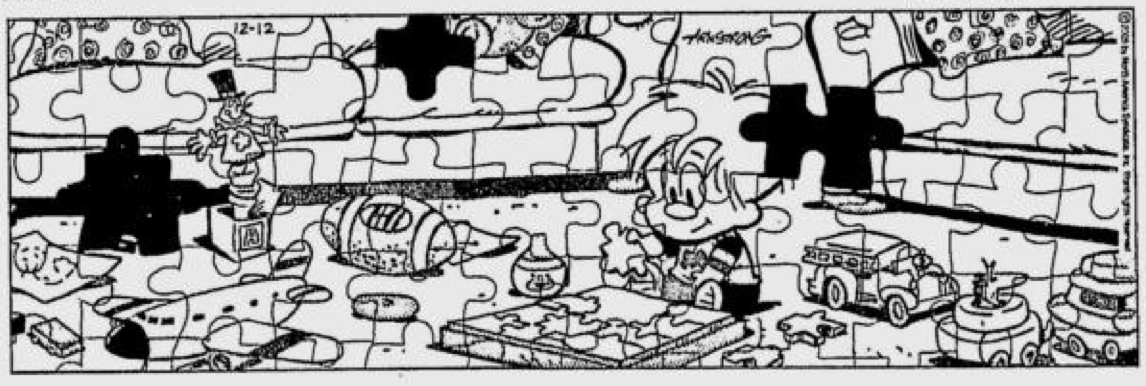
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


MAY SECOND OPENING PALA ITONG EXHIBIT MO?
MAY COCKTAILS PA NGAYON!
IBIG MONG SABIHIN MARAMI PANG COLLECTORS NG ARTWORKS MO?
HINDI
12/12/05
MARAMI PA AKONG KAMAGANAK DITO!
MAY MGA BRODS KA PA SA BETA SIGMA!
SOLD OUT ULIT

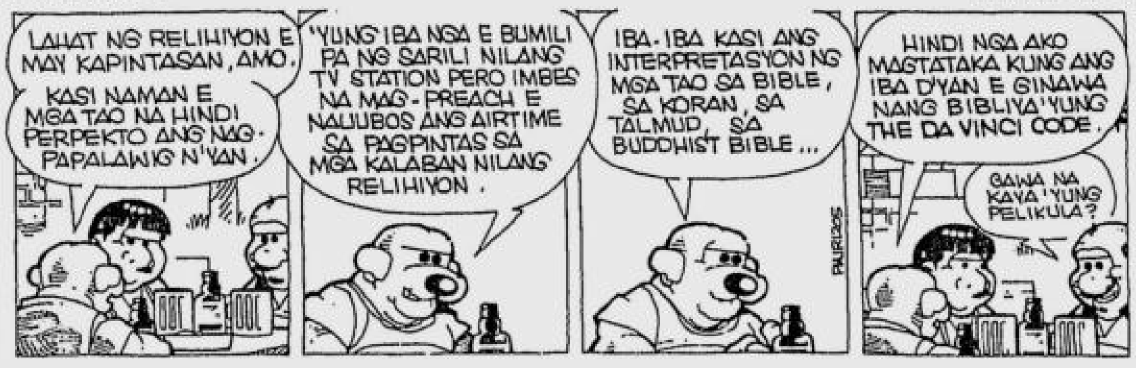
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


12-12
ARMSTRONG

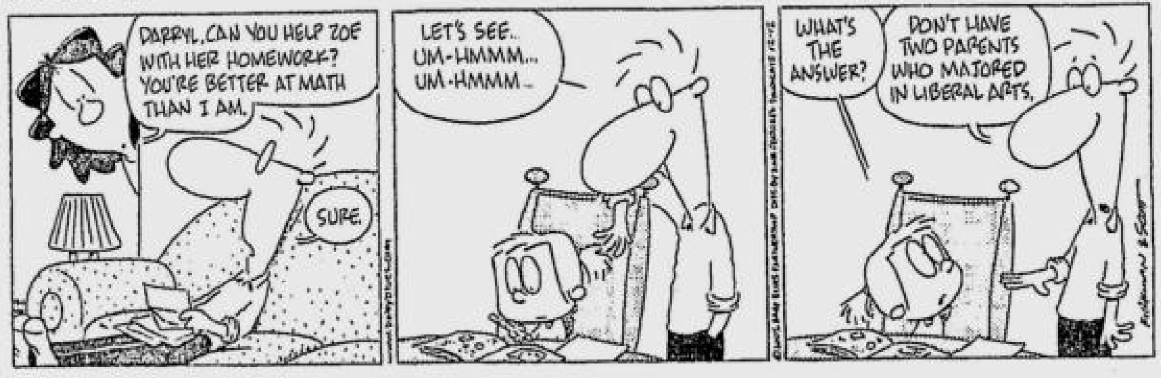
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


LAHAT NG RELIHIYON E MAY KAPINTASAN, AMO.
KASI NAMAN E MGA TAO NA HINDI PERPEKTO ANG NAG-PAPALAWIG N'YAN.
'YUNG IBA NGA E BUMILI PA NG SARILI NILANG TV STATION PERO IMBES NA MAG-PREACH E NAUUBOS ANG AIRTIME SA PAGPINTAS SA MGA KALABAN NILANG RELIHIYON.
IBA-IBA KASI ANG INTERPRETASYON NG MGA TAO SA BIBLE, SA KORAN, SA TALMUD, SA BUDDHIST BIBLE...
PAURIDOS
HINDI NGA AKO MAGTATAKA KUNG ANG IBA D'YAN E GINAWA NANG BIBLIYA 'YUNG THE DA VINCI CODE.
GAWA NA KAYA 'YUNG PELIKULA?

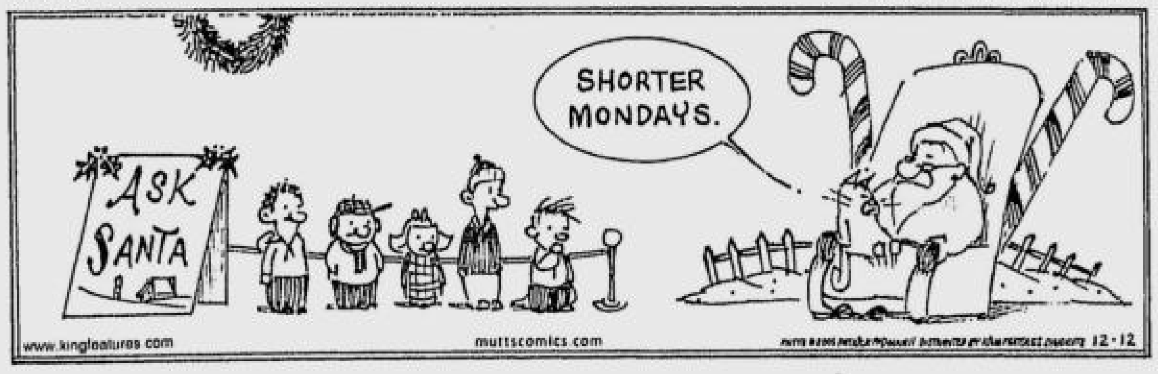
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


DARRYL, CAN YOU HELP ZOE WITH HER HOMEWORK? YOU'RE BETTER AT MATH THAN I AM.
SURE.
LET'S SEE.. UM-HMMM... UM-HMMM...
WHAT'S THE ANSWER?
DON'T HAVE TWO PARENTS WHO MAJORED IN LIBERAL ARTS.

MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL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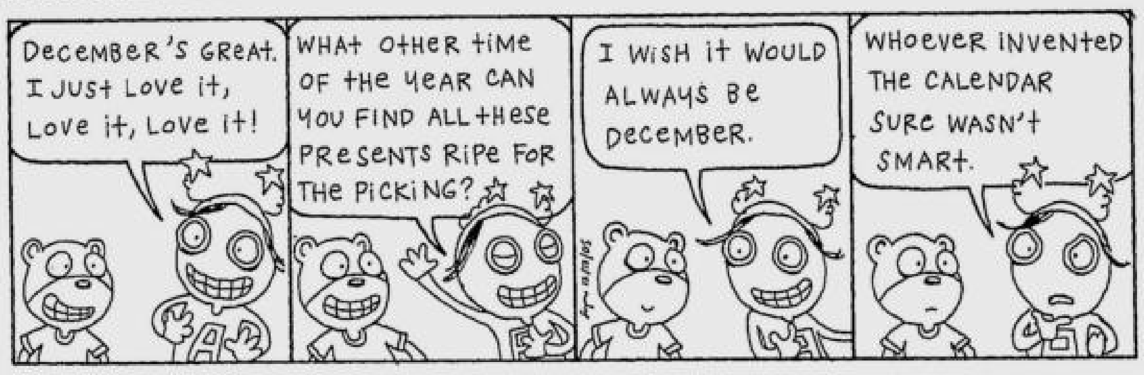
12-12

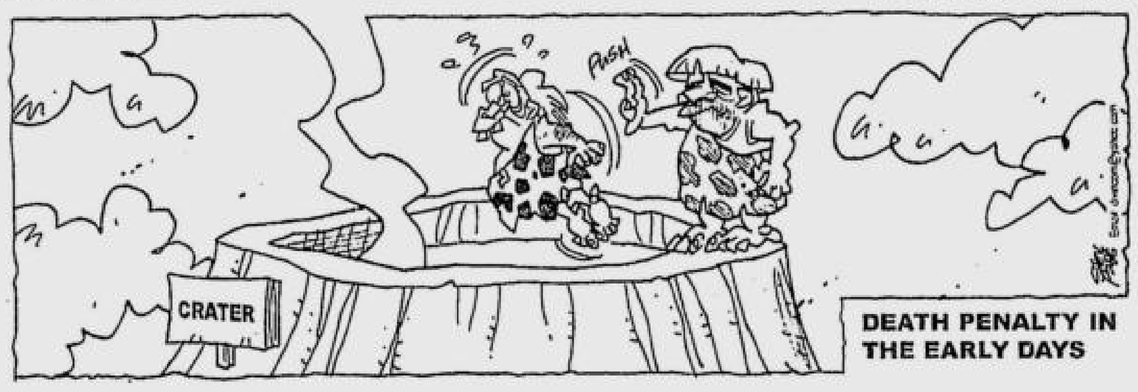
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


December's Great. I Just Love it, Love it, Love it!
What other time of the year can you find all these presents ripe for the picking?
I wish it would always be December.
Whoever invented the calendar sure wasn't smart.

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


PUSH
CRATER
DEATH PENALTY IN THE EARLY DAYS

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're a serious optimist (a curious combo). You're not afraid of hard work and heavy responsibilities. You plan ahead and are faithful to your goals. Because you're surefooted, you influence others. You're determined; nothing daunts you. Work hard to build and construct something in the next year. This is important.
Birthdate of: Naguib Mahfouz, writer; Donna Mills, actress; Rider Strong, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): People will give you things and do favors for you in the next year. That's because you stand to benefit from others through inheritances, perks, gifts and support.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Partnerships and marriage certainly favor you now. The next 18 months are a perfect time to form any kind of partnership. It's great for wedding bells too.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Don't lose sight of the fact that you can really improve your job this year. Believe that this is possible, and it will happen!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Make sure you take a vacation sometime in the next 12-15 months. This is the best time in more than a decade to do so. Work with children will also be rewarding.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Home, family and real estate matters will absolutely delight you for most of 2006. Your home and family will become a source of joy for you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Your sense of optimism definitely increases in the next year. For some reason, you believe more in your own future. This belief alone will guarantee you a better year!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You have the best chance to make more money than you have had in more than a decade. All that glitters is gold! Expect to be spending more in the year ahead as well.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is an extremely fortunate time for you. You're at a career peak with respect to a nine-year cycle; in addition to this, lucky Jupiter is in your sign for the first time in 12 years. Go, team, go!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You've got lots of energy to use in your job now. That's because Mars stayed in Taurus for so long. (It remains there until February.) This entirely affects your employment scene in a good way.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You have an extremely popular year ahead to look forward to. Not only that, all partnerships that you form now will become profitable and beneficial to you.

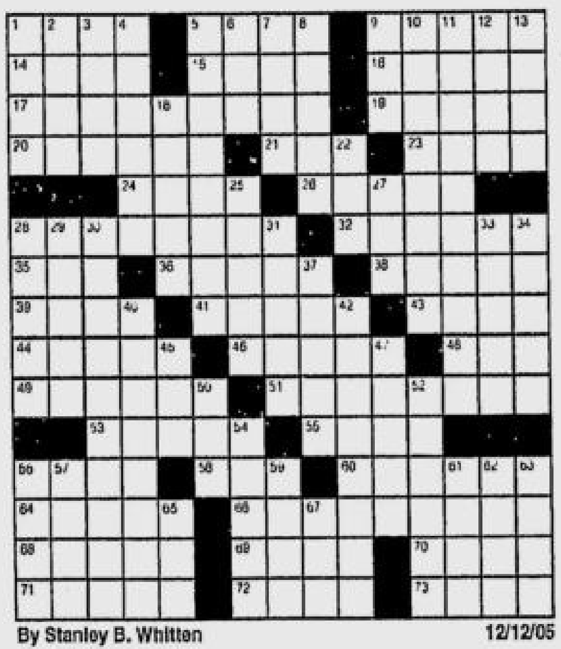
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Partnerships are very challenging for many of you now. That's because those that are more trouble than they're worth will likely end now.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Education, travel and publishing are areas that are highly focused in the next year. Many of you will take a long journey. New adventure beckons!

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 "M*A*S*H" star
5 Squealers
9 Grade over max
14 Synthesizer man
15 Lamb's pen name
16 Packing container
17 Garden State address
19 Memento
20 Lips
21 CIA forerunner
23 Annoying person
24 Used the pool
26 From within
28 Goal
32 Bricklayers
35 According to
36 Brand-name instr.
38 German noble
39 Fusses
41 Stored away
43 First name in jeans
44 Uprisings
46 Crippled
48 Dupe
49 Shelter
51 Oscillates
53 Spore-producing plants
55 Follow closely
56 Average
58 Long period of time
60 Afternoon china
64 Construction piece
66 Golden State address
68 Nautical pump
69 Skier's ride
70 Wield needles
71 Passover dinner
72 Concordes
73 Tommie of baseball

DOWN
1 Out-of-control
2 Centers of attention
3 Accomplishes
4 Andre of the courts
5 New soldiers
6 Boxing great
7 Josip Broz
8 Authorization
9 False front
10 Suggestion
11 Prairie State address
12 University of Utah team
13 Shipped
18 Salamanders
22 Addition figure
25 Ethical
27 Can opener
28 Separate
29 Current events sources
30 Badger State address
31 Involving warships
33 Exploding stars
34 Uses scissors
37 Relinquish
40 First Class, it's not
42 Arguers in a formal setting
45 Title of respect
47 Less wet
50 Compass pt.
52 The Last Frontier
54 Classifies
56 Prevarications
57 Irish Rose's love
59 Points of a pens
61 Warble
62 Singer Brickell
63 Pierre's noggin
65 Mal de _
67 Tub



By Stanley B. Whitten
Highwood, IL

12/12/05

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

G	A	T	O	R	■	R	O	M	A	■	R	O	T	E
O	T	O	L	O	G	I	C	A	L	■	A	P	E	D
G	O	L	D	M	E	D	A	L	S	■	D	E	A	N
O	M	E	G	A	S	■	S	T	O	T	I	N	K	A
■	■	■	U	N	T	O	■	A	R	O	U	S	E	S
P	A	N	A	C	E	A	S	■	A	S	S	E	T	■
S	C	A	R	E	■	T	A	R	N	S	■	S	T	E
S	C	U	D	■	H	E	X	E	S	■	H	A	L	T
T	O	T	■	L	A	S	E	R	■	C	O	M	E	T
■	M	I	T	E	S	■	S	U	D	A	N	E	S	E
S	P	L	I	N	T	S	■	N	E	R	O	■	■	■
C	L	U	M	S	I	E	R	■	V	A	R	I	E	D
R	I	S	E	■	E	R	A	D	I	C	A	B	L	E
I	C	E	R	■	S	E	C	U	L	A	R	I	S	M
M	E	S	S	■	T	R	E	E	■	L	Y	S	E	S

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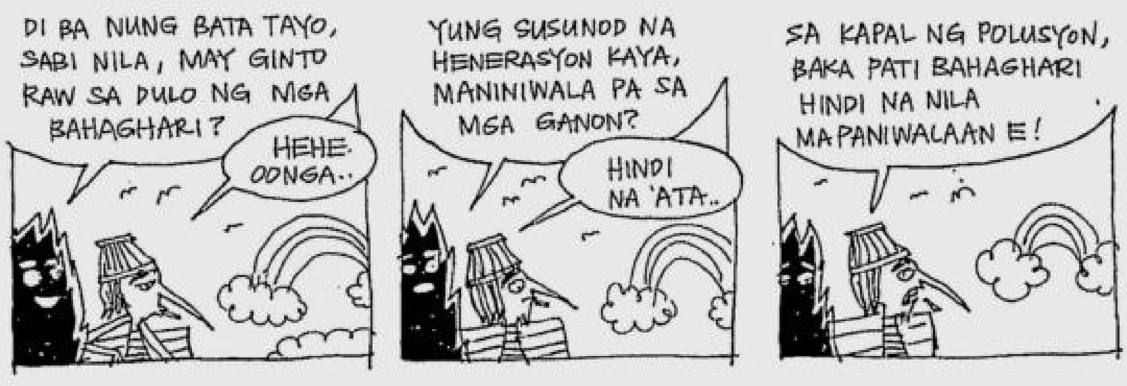
12/12/05

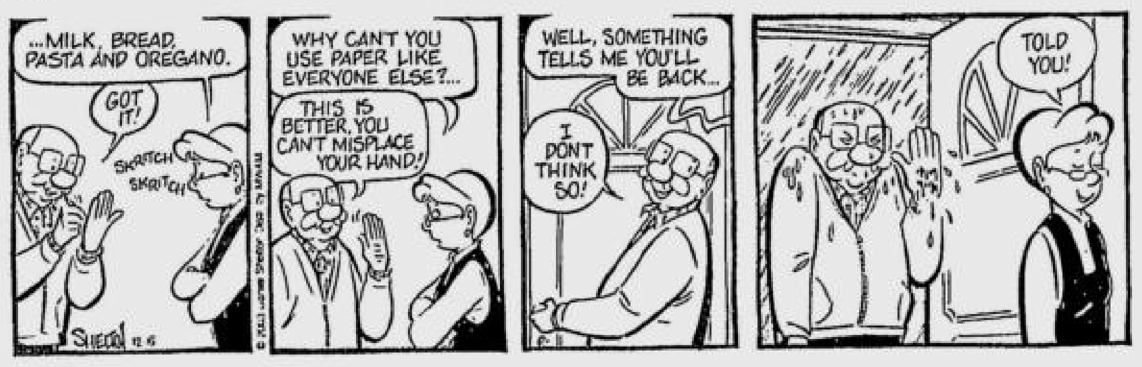
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


DI BA NUNG BATA TAYO, SABI NILA, MAY GINTO RAW SA DULO NG MGA BAHAGHARI?
HEHE. OONGA..
YUNG SUSUNOD NA HENERASYON KAYA, MANINIWALA PA SA MGA GANON?
HINDI NA 'ATA..
SA KAPAL NG POLUSYON, BAKA PATI BAHAGHARI HINDI NA NILA MAPANIWALAAN E!

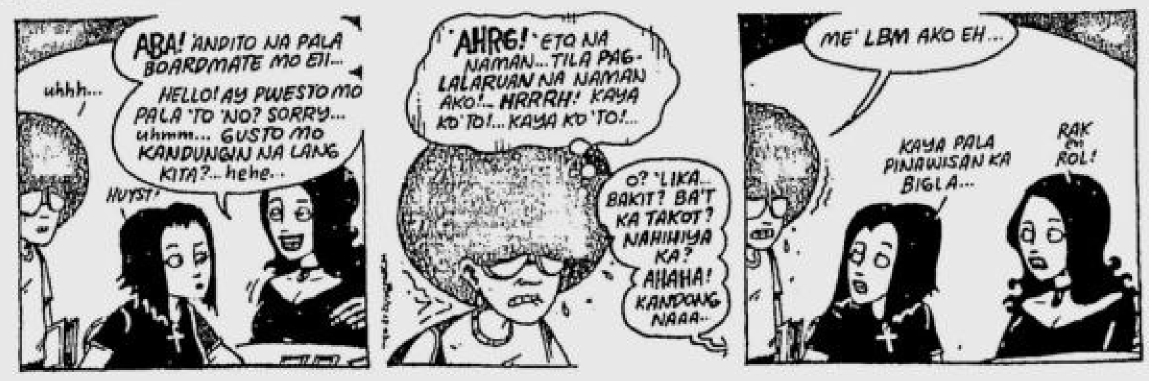
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


...MILK, BREAD, PASTA AND OREGANO.
GOT IT!
SKRITCH SKRITCH
SHELTON 12-5
WHY CAN'T YOU USE PAPER LIKE EVERYONE ELSE?...
THIS IS BETTER, YOU CAN'T MISPLACE YOUR HAND!
WELL, SOMETHING TELLS ME YOU'LL BE BACK...
I DON'T THINK SO!
TOLD YOU!

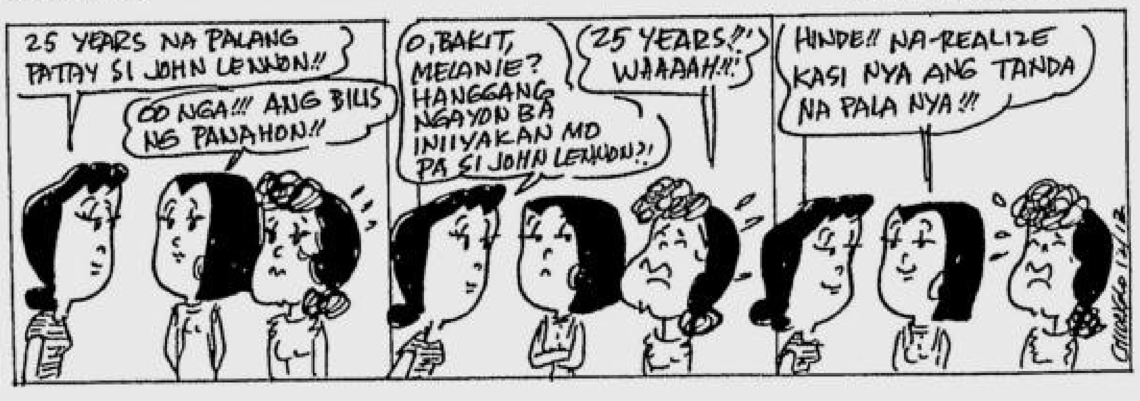
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


uhhh...
ABA! 'ANDITO NA PALA BOARDMATE MO EH...
HELLO! AY PWESTO MO PALA 'TO 'NO? SORRY... uhmm... GUSTO MO KANDUNGIN NA LANG KITA?...hehe..
HUYST!
AHRG! ETO NA NAMAN... TILA PAG-LALARUAN NA NAMAN AKO!... HRRRH! KAYA KO 'TO!... KAYA KO 'TO!...
O? 'LIKA.. BAKIT? BA'T KA TAKOT? NAHIHIYA KA? AHAHA! KANDONG NAAA..
ME' LBM AKO EH...
KAYA PALA PINAWISAN KA BIGLA...
RAK EN ROL!

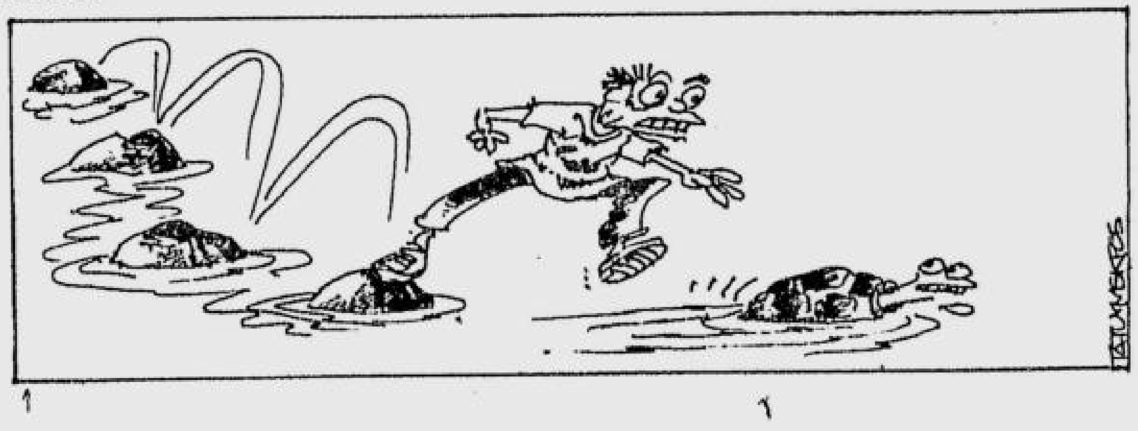
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


25 YEARS NA PALANG PATAY SI JOHN LENNON!!
OO NGA!!! ANG BILIS NG PANAHON!!
O, BAKIT, MELANIE? HANGGANG NGAYON BA INIIYAKAN MO PA SI JOHN LENNON?!
25 YEARS!! WAAAAH!!!
HINDE!! NA-REALIZE KASI NYA ANG TANDA NA PALA NYA!!!
CHIONGLO 12/12

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


TATUMWORKS

THE LION Aslan talks to Edmund after the latter's rescue.

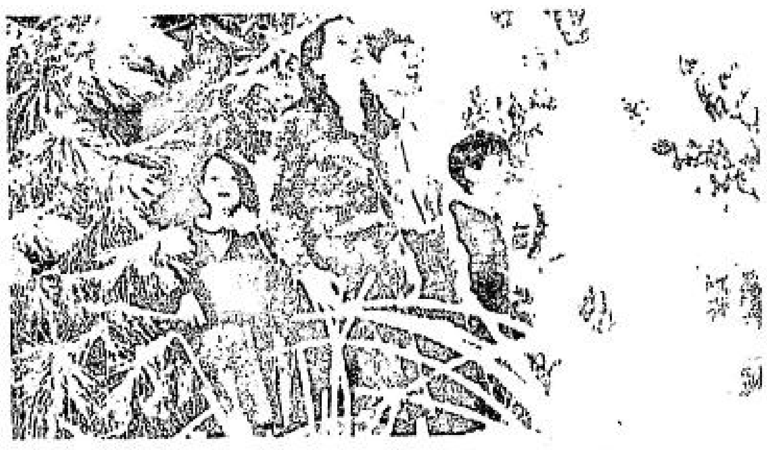
'Narnia' gets magical 'Wardrobe' change

From page E1

ing by the coldhearted white witch, Jadis. And the children, through the urgings of little Lucy and the guidance of the noble lion, Aslan, help get Narnia its lush green and warm happiness back.

Ageless classic on film

In intending the story and the characters in it to be partial to no age, Lewis, perhaps inadvertently, created a fable that has been loved and passed on down generations since it was published in 1950.



THE PEVENSIE children walk into Narnia for the first time.

SUSAN, Peter and Lucy face danger in the search for Edmund.

It should be no wonder then that it took this long for an attempt at a cinematic telling. As with any well-loved masterpiece, recreating the story for the big screen is treading on delicate ground, what with fans worldwide turning into critics, possibly irritable, at the smallest mistake. But thanks to a respectably believable cast and present-day computer-generated image (CGI) technology, Walt Disney Pictures and Walden Media have come out with the first-ever film version of "The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe." It is directed by live-action film newbie Andrew Adamson.

The film version adds some scenes to the beginning of the story to establish the bleak atmosphere of the Second World War. It shows the Pevensie children during an air raid, and then being sent away to the countryside to escape the war. From there on, the screenplay, a collaboration between Adamson, Emmy Award-winner Ann Peacock ("A Lesson Before Dying") and Emmy winners Christopher Markus and Stephen McFeely ("The Life and Death of Peter Sellers"), is pretty much faithful to the book.

The real challenge, undoubtedly, was rendering Narnia into reality, especially its rightful

'NARNIA'/E4

LUCY peeks into the room with the wardrobe.

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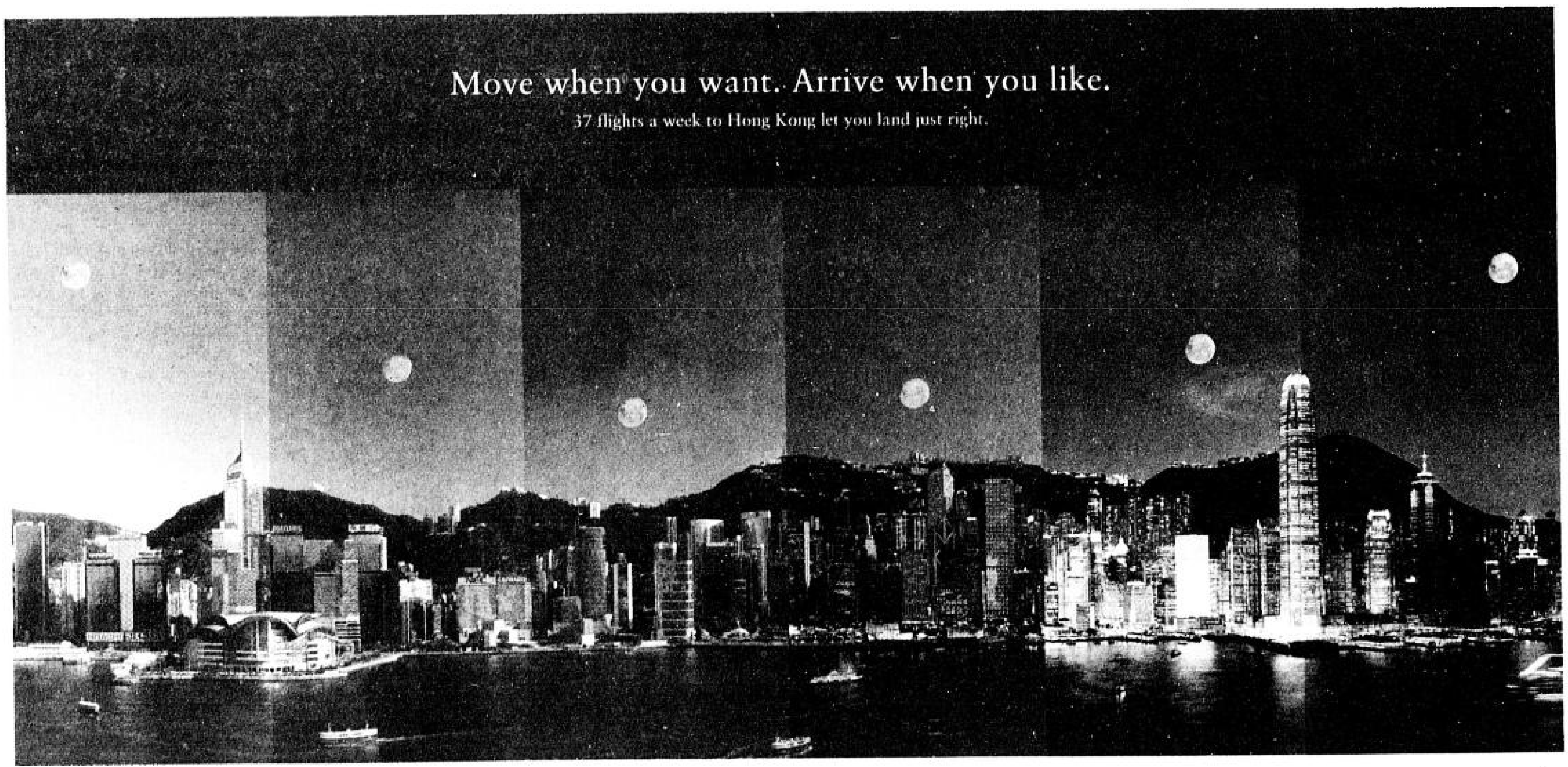

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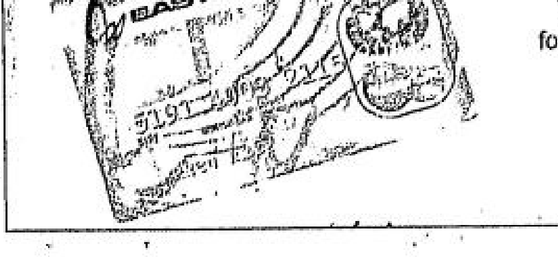

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THE CHILDREN at the lamppost that marks the boundary between Narnia and the human world

THE PEVENSIE children, (clockwise from left): Edmund (Skandar Keynes), Peter (William Moseley), Susan (Anna Popplewell), and Lucy (Georgie Henley)

'Narnia' gets magical . . .

From page E3

ruler, the lion Aslan. But Adamson is no stranger to the task of creating scenes and characters out of CGI: He directed the Oscar-winning worldwide hit "Shrek" and its sequel, "Shrek 2." And in "Chronicles," Aslan comes out very real and not cartoonish, from the majestic mane to the muscle movements in his jaws when he talks.

The other magical creatures—fauns, dwarves, giants, minotaurs and minobaurs—come to life care of WETA Workshop, which was also responsible for rendering onscreen the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy, based the epic by Lewis' friend J.R.R. Tolkien.

Still, production took years to plan and finish, say producers. But the result was well worth it. "Chronicles" should satisfy Lewis readers with its rich depiction of the magical world, if not baffle them with the meticulous attention obviously put into the details.

Respectable cast

The Pevensie children carry the story from beginning to end, and so must the actors with the film. "Wardrobe" is a story of four fairly average growing children—Peter, the eldest, a hesitant leader; Susan the practical thinker, Edmund the ill-disciplined boy, and Lucy the incessantly optimistic. It was thus important, says executive producer Perry Moore, that the film should involve "real" kids who are true to their ages and personalities as well as to those of the characters.

Months of casting auditions and interviews brought the producers William Moseley (Peter), Anna Popplewell (Susan), Skandar Keynes (Edmund), and Georgie Henley (Lucy).

Immediately, moviegoers will love Lucy as portrayed by bubbly Henley, whose childlike optimism and reactions of fear, sadness, or gaiety are very believable. Keynes is mischievous enough. Popplewell is perhaps the most "mature" of the four when it comes to acting: Her recent roles include Vermeer's eldest daughter, Maertge, in Peter Webber's "Girl with a Pearl Earring." Moseley, however, comes off as raw, perhaps too softly portraying Peter's hesitation to lead.

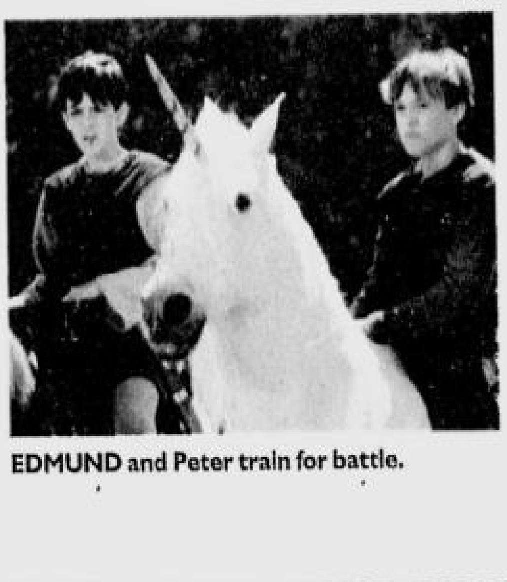
Meanwhile, Lewis' white witch was a cold and deceptive creature. She comes to life thanks to Scottish Actress Tilda Swinton, whose sophisticated portrayal of Jadis is reminiscent of her Gabriel in the Keanu Reeves starrer, "Constantine."

Established Scottish actor Liam Neeson provides the deep, rich, and regal voice of Aslan, Narnia's lion lord, while Academy Award winner Jim Broadbent fleshes out Professor Kirke, owner of the mansion and the children's patron and guardian.

Lewis' magic lives on

"Chronicles," following the book, ends with the children stumbling back into the mansion and into their normal selves. They look back, and throughout the events that follow wonder whether they can get into the magical realm of Narnia again. The Professor, a likeable fellow who Lewis could have intended to be himself—the old man who believes—answers this to Lucy one time that she tries to open the wardrobe door again: "Not through there, and not when you're looking for it."

With the film letting moviegoers—fans of the book series or not—experience Narnia's old magic anew, Lewis' immortal legacy has been ensured. While there is no news of future projects on the other "Chronicles" books, that is not too farfetched an idea, given other film series of a similar theme, such as the "Harry Potter" phenomenon. But while the "Harry Potter" series weaves magic with drama and thrilling suspense, "Chronicles" is unwittingly fresh and fairly light even with the heavy theme of good having to battle extreme evil. But then again, that's the magic of a fairy tale—intellectually, but spiritually uplifting, and inevitably eternal.



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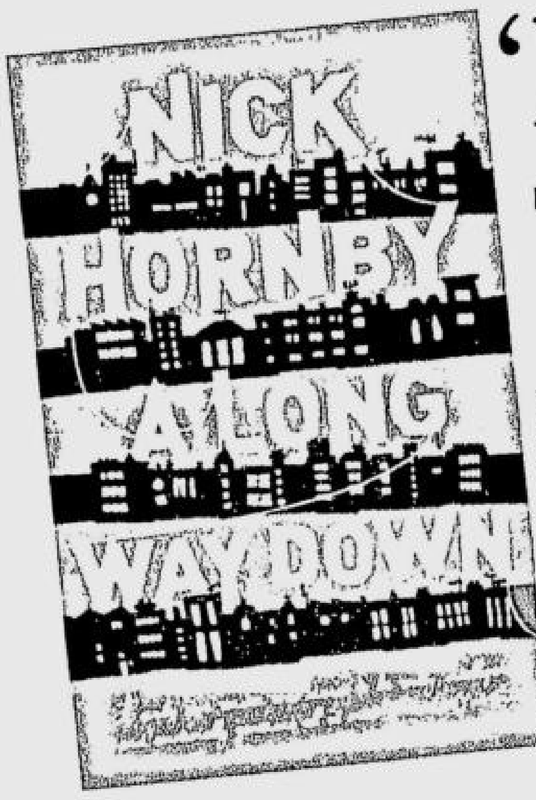
Nick Hornby gets 'Down' with it



By Ruel S. De Vera

"A Long Way Down"
By Nick Hornby
Viking, London
2005, 257 pages

WHETHER IT'S THE VINYL-preferring collector of "High Fidelity," the solitude-seeking alpha male of "About a Boy" or the Arsenal-supporting leading man of "Fever Pitch," Nick Hornby's protagonists are all slightly oddball smart guys who use wit and their obsessions to look and live beyond the despair of their daily lives.

That idea is taking to literal length in Hornby's newest novel, "A Long Way Down," which bears some hallmarks of Hornby's charming writing and yet is different in other ways. It's New Year's Eve in London and four people find themselves on the same roof because they're all planning to kill themselves.

When the four decide, at novel's start, to postpone their jumps, "Down" moves briskly, introducing us to the four. There's Martin, the tanned TV host who should be content except that he has gotten caught in a shameful sexual circumstance and is now hated by his family.

There's the raincoat-wearing Maureen, who has only ever slept with one man just once and is wracked by guilt over her wish to be free of her disabled child, Matty.

There's Jess, an angry, foul-

NICK/ F4

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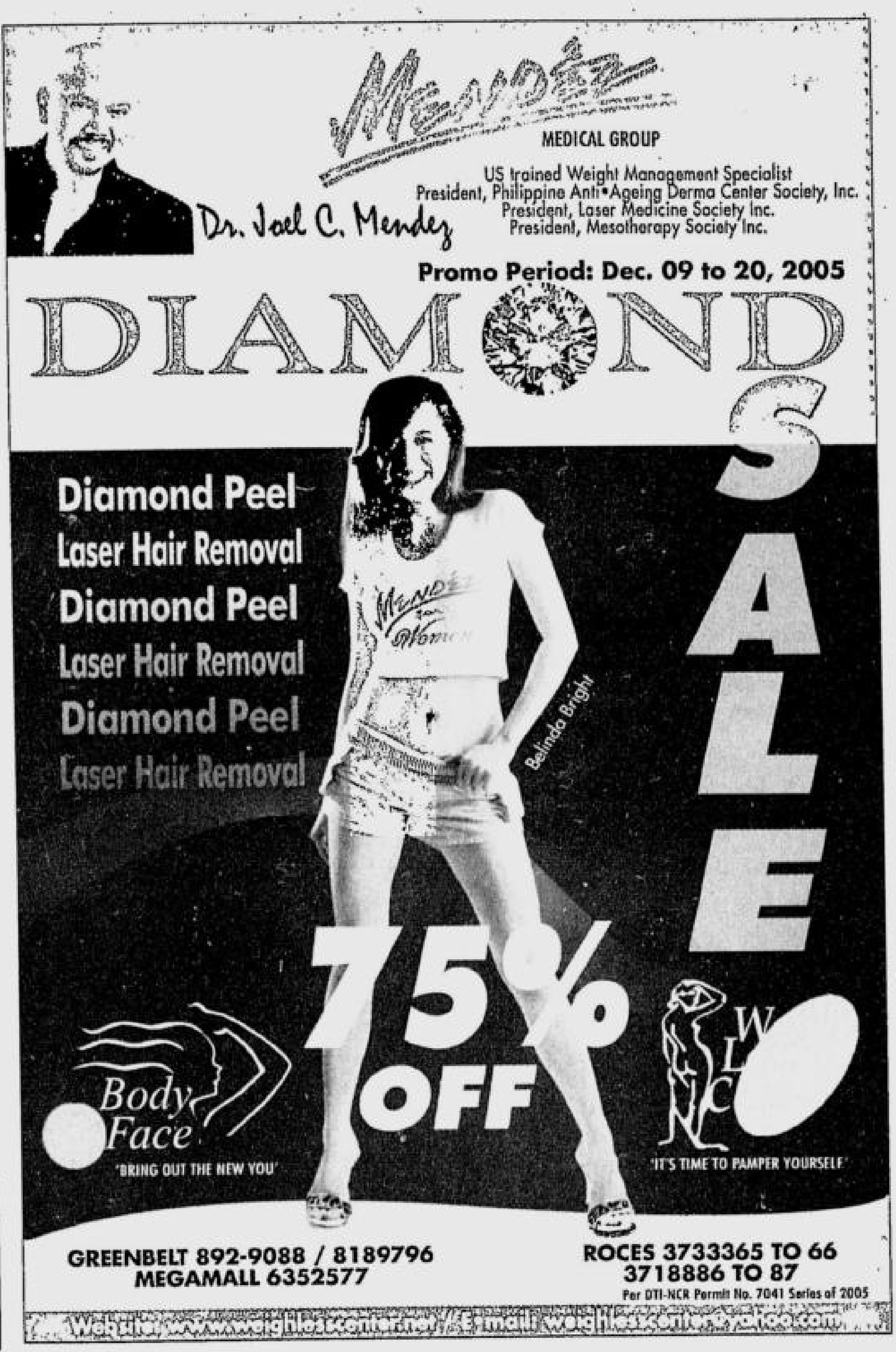

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GMA takes a break

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

SOPRANO Eleanor Calbes

WHEN THE PROTOCOL officer from Malacañang informed me by phone that the President herself was coming to the closing show of the Best of the Philippines Concert Series featuring soprano Eleanor Calbes and pianist Raul Sunico, I thought: "Would she actually find time for this?"

But she did arrive after the soprano's Strauss' and Liszt's art songs and after the powerful "Rigoletto" duet with baritone Noel Azcona.

I gave President Macapagal-Arroyo's entourage the center loge section. From where I was seated, I took a quick look at the President while Calbes was singing Ponce's "Estrellita" and wondered if the song could actually lighten presidential woes.

A few days back, her cultural adviser, Executive Director Cecile Alvarez of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, hinted that the President had a heart for the Filipino artists, but would I please slant the concert repertoire to connect with the government's anti-poverty program?

I did not quite know how to go about this. From experience, I knew that unsponsored classical concerts were virtual invitations to poverty. A standing ovation didn't pay for venue rental and a good review didn't exempt impresarios from paying artists' fees.

I banished these thoughts as I saw the President join the crowd in a well-deserved standing ovation for Calbes after her encore, "Sa Kabukiran."

At the reception, the President told the Filipino diva how good she was, and, for one brief shining moment, the crowd and the President probably took a well-deserved respite at the Philam-Life Theater from "Hello Garci" tapes.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo congratulates Calbes.

Two more shows

After her well-received Manila concert, Calbes got two more standing ovations: at St. Paul University in Tuguegarao City and a massive one at the Church of San Lorenzo Ruiz at the Lyceum of Aparri in Aparri, Cagayan, the diva's hometown.

The irony is that, while La Calbes was acclaimed from Manila to Toronto and, earlier, on Broadway, she was never heard by her own provincemates all her singing life!

And so her illustrious uncle, Cagayan Archbishop Diosdado Talamayan, and Fr. Joel Reyes of the Lyceum of Aparri made sure the concert would be an event to remember.

It helped, of course, that the full-packed San Lorenzo Ruiz Church had excellent acoustics and the upright piano did actually sound like a baby grand in the hands of Jonathan Coo.

The soprano—with pianist Coo this time—shared the stage with her singing doctor-sister Delicia Calbes Asimont, who was equally ravishing especially in two American folk songs: John Jacob Niles' "The Black Dress" and "The Wild Rider."

Meanwhile, there were two excellent concerts during the week: pianist Mary Anne Espina at the Cultural Center of the Philippines' Filipino Artists Series and violin prodigy Chino Gutierrez with the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra under professor Oscar Yatco. Gutierrez also had a solo recital at the RCBC Hall with pianist Espina.

Tenor Otoniel Gonzaga, pitching in for an indisposed tenor by singing Florestan in the opera "Fidelio" at the San Francisco Opera, was very well-received. He just covered for Placido Domingo at the National Opera in Washington, DC.

Gonzaga's coming concert with Lea Salonga at the CCP on Jan. 25, 2006, has unprecedented advance ticket sales. Just a few side seats remain to be sold. For ticket inquiries, call 9017156 or 0910-8851136.

Flamenco finds its form in Clara Ramona

By Edmund L. Sicam
Contributor

FLAMENCO DANCER/choreographer Clara Ramona is full of surprises. When I sat down with her for an interview, I assumed she had Spanish blood because of her Castilian features and her Spanish accent.

Earlier, I watched her rehearse two dance numbers in Repertory Philippines' production of "Man of La Mancha," currently showing at Rep's Globe Theater at Onstage in Greenbelt, Makati. That convinced me that Ramona was as Hispanic as Penelope Cruz or Antonio Banderas.

She surprised me when she revealed she was born in Quezon City to an American father and a Pinay mother!

Passion

At an early age, Ramona started taking ballet and piano lessons but only because her parents wanted her to go. She had not yet developed the passion for dance that would move her to embrace it as a full-time career.

When she was five, the family moved to Boston where she spent her formative years. In college, she took up dance as a major because ballet was her first love. She graduated with a BFA in Dance at the Boston Conservatory of Music and Dance.

Ramona was exposed to ballet, modern dance, jazz and Spanish classical dance, but it was flamenco that piqued her interest. She found herself falling in love with the Spanish dance and felt the need to keep going back to class.

"I don't know if it was the rhythm, I would always go home tapping my feet after class," she said. "You have to have a strong personality when you dance the flamenco. It's a very passionate dance. That's what I liked about it because I was able to express myself in a way that I couldn't in any other medium. It's a dance that involves the whole body. Even the skin feels like dancing."

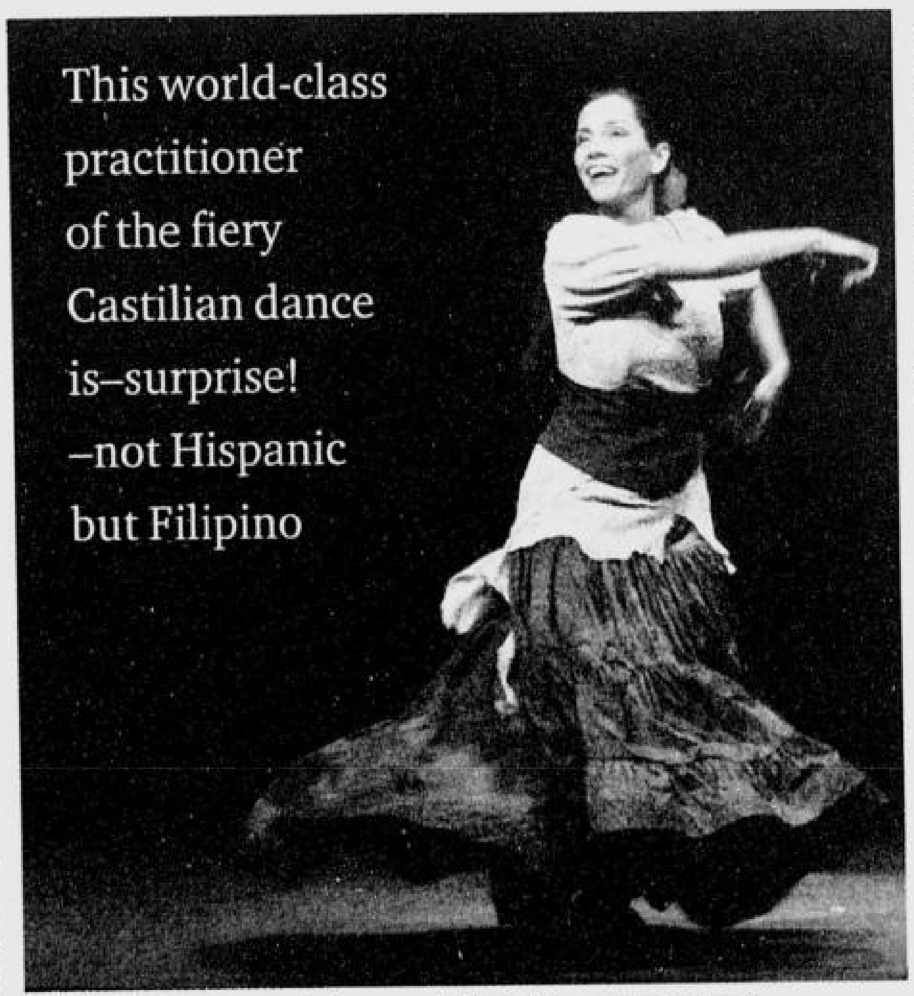
After college, she took further training, starting with flamenco master Ramon de los Reyes in Boston. Teacher and student eventually developed a special relationship outside of the dance studio. They got married, a union that produced two sons, Isaac and Nino. (The two are also flamenco dancers based in Madrid.).

Plaudits

Ramona became the lead dancer and choreographer in the Ramon de los Reyes Dance theater. She also trained with Manolo Vargas and Antonio de Cordoba in Mexico and Ciro, La Tati, Jose Granero and Tomas de Madrid in Spain.

It was here that she won plaudits for her many choreographies and performances such as "Bravo Flamenco," accompanied by the great guitar master Sabicas, "Fiesta Flamenca Navidena" funded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council and "Yerma," funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and performed for Amnesty International.

She is especially proud of her work in Carl Orff's "Carmina Burana" which debuted in 1989 at the North Shore Music Theater, accompanied by the Paul Madore Orchestra and Chorus and considered by many critics as one of the best choreographies of the year.



This world-class practitioner of the fiery Castilian dance is–surprise! –not Hispanic but Filipino

CLARA Ramona dances the flamenco in Rep's "Man of La Mancha."

An art critic, Carmen Padilla, wrote that Ramona "widens the horizons of the art of innovative and experimental dance, reconciling contemporary dance with flamenco and demonstrating that the connection between the elements of music and dance have no limits."

Ramona has also made a name for herself as a teacher on the faculty of the Boston Conservatory of Music and the Walnut Hill School of Performing Arts. In 1997, she set up the Clara Ramona Dance Studio in Madrid.

Her expertise in flamenco has brought her to many parts of the world: Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, People's Republic of China, Japan and the Philippines.

Homecoming

Late last year, she visited the land of her birth to give lessons at the Fundacion Centro Flamenco in Makati. The visit must have affected her because two months after she returned to Madrid, she decided to come back to the Philippines and settle down here. It's a decision she doesn't regret making, she said.

Several months ago, Repertory Philippines needed a Spanish dancer for its production of "Man of La Mancha." Although there is no mention of a dance number at the start of the musical, director Baby Barredo decided to put in a dance as the overture is being played. Rep turned to Centro Flamenco, which recommended Ramona.

Ramona enjoyed working with the group of actors and singers of "La Mancha and got so inspired listening to them that she decided to take voice lessons under Jay Glorioso.

So don't be surprised if one of these days, she adds singing to her impressive list of credentials and mount a song and dance solo concert.

Remaining performances of "Man of La Mancha" are on Dec. 16-17, at 8 p.m., and Dec. 18 at 3:30 p.m,. at the Onstage Theatre, Greenbelt 1, Makati City.

CLARA with sons Nino and Isaac, also flamenco dancers based in Spain

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PWU Chorale in Xmas concert

THE PHILIPPINE WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY Chorale, a university-based choral group founded in 1998 by former PWU College of Music dean and renowned Filipino composer Dr. Francisco Feliciano, will hold the concert, "Sketches of Time," on Dec. 15, 5 p.m., at the PWU Concert Hall. They will be performing pieces from different genres and eras. Tickets are available at the PWU School of Music.

The PWU Chorale was a top winner in the 1999 National Music Competition for Young Artists and was dubbed one of the best university choirs in the Philippines. Now under the baton of choral master Elitess Mayor-Cariño, the group is preparing for another European tour in June 2006.

'Choirs and Carols of Christmas' at Far Eastern U

THE FAR EASTERN UNIVERSITY, through the President's Committee on Culture, welcomes the Yuletide season with a choral festival titled "The Choirs and Carols of Christmas," featuring some of the best school-based choirs in Manila on Dec. 13, at the FEU Auditorium, Nicanor Reyes, Sr. Ave. Sampaloc, Manila.

The concert will present various musical genres as interpreted by the FEU Chorale, the Philippine Children's Choir from Mandaluyong (PCCM), MainStream and the University of Santo Tomas Singers.

Host choir FEU Chorale, under conductor Emerson Hernandez, opens the show with their rendition of classical and contemporary sacred compositions.

The prized PCCM under Sebastian Trinidad follows with children's music and Filipino Christmas tunes arranged by Joy Nilo. The choir, which has reaped honors in international choral tilts, will be accompanied by pianist-composer Alejandro Consolacion II.

The show takes a pop twist with six-man MainStream with their *a capella* medleys of Josh Groban songs, OPM songs, Disney themes and Christmas songs. Composed of alumni of the Kundirana of La Salle Greenhills High School, MainStream is a performing group whose several musical arrangements have been recorded by the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra.

Concluding the show is the multi-awarded UST Singers with their rendition of Broadway medleys arranged by their musical director Fidel Calalang, as well as solemn traditional Christmas carols.

Admission is free. Shows are at 10:45 a.m. and 3:15 p.m. Call 7364897.

'A theater forever young'

By Onofre Pagsanghan
Contributor

DULAANG SIBOL OF Ateneo de Manila University celebrates its 50th anniversary, making it one of the oldest extant drama groups in the Philippines.

An old theater program dated Feb. 25, 1955, heralds its inception as the Ateneo High School Dramatics Society. Soon it was drawing crowds with its steady stream of Shakespearean plays from "Macbeth" to "Hamlet." Its other plays then were Edmond Rostand's "Cyrano de Bergerac" and Agatha Christie's "And Then There Were None."

In 1966, with its first production of Filipino plays, the group gave itself a new name—Dulaang Sibol.

With the new name came new ventures. First, translations, then "transplantations." Thus, Thornton Wilder's "Our Town" emerged as "Doon Po sa Amin"; J.M. Barrie's "Dear Brutus" morphed as "Wala sa Ating Mga Bituin."

The year 1967 spawned our Paligsahang Pandulaan. We dared our high school students to write and produce their own plays. The challenge spurred the 16-year-old Paul Dumol to soar with his "Ang Puting Timamanukin" and to sear with his "Ang Paglilitis ni Mang Serapio." Days after the first *paligsahan*, newspaper critics were hailing the winning plays as "a major breakthrough in the development of our national language."

If the young can write plays that can move critics to sit up and take notice, perhaps they can write songs that a nation will sing to. Thus was born our Timpalak Awit in 1975. Four years later, a first-year high school student wrote a song that would later be hailed as the best original Filipino composition of that year. The song—"Hindi Kita Malilimutan." The 14-year-old composer then is now the seasoned songwriter, Fr. Manoling Francisco, SJ.

In 1976, after 20 years of staging our plays in converted classrooms and borrowed halls, in slum clearings and convent parlors, the Ateneo gifted us with a theater home, small and intimate with 156 precious seats. We are grateful.

And this year, after an unbroken series of productions for 50 years, we celebrate our golden anniversary with "Ani," a harvest of some six productions crowned by a Sibol-grown musical, "Adarna."

Fifty years old and still, Dulaang Sibol is, in the words of Fr. Miguel Bernad SJ, "a theater forever young." And in many aspects, the description is apt. Sibolistas are high school students, as young as 12 and no older than 18.

Still Dulaang Sibol is high school theater with a difference. National Artist Leonor Orosa Goquinco describes it as "high school theater with a professional polish." Critic Bien Lumbera labels it as "a seminal force in the development of Philippine playwriting."

Dulaang Sibol is theater of the young, for the young and the young at heart.

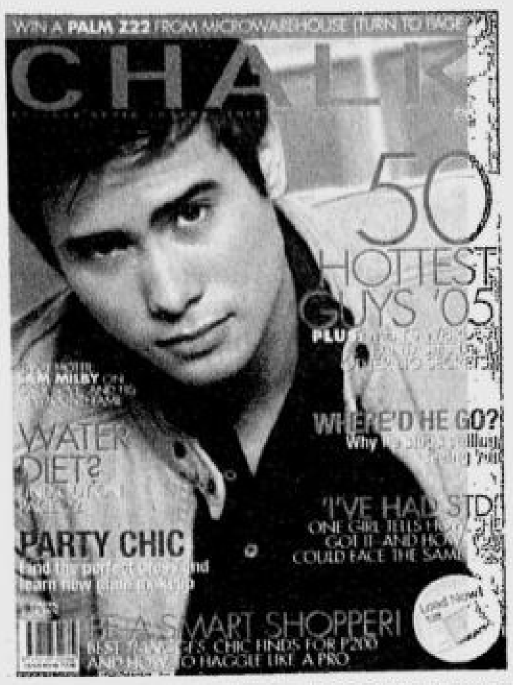
It is a seedbed for Philippine theater, sprouting sprigs green with promise. It evokes the star-ward thrust of the Alpha, more than the full flowering of the Omega.

It is a brave beginning that can sometimes startle and stun, as only the young can with that exciting brew of idealism and naivete, served with a daring dash of passionate vulnerability and the fumbling exuberance of birdlings in their first flight.

Come, celebrate with us!

The author is the managing director of Dulaang Sibol.

Sexy calendar out



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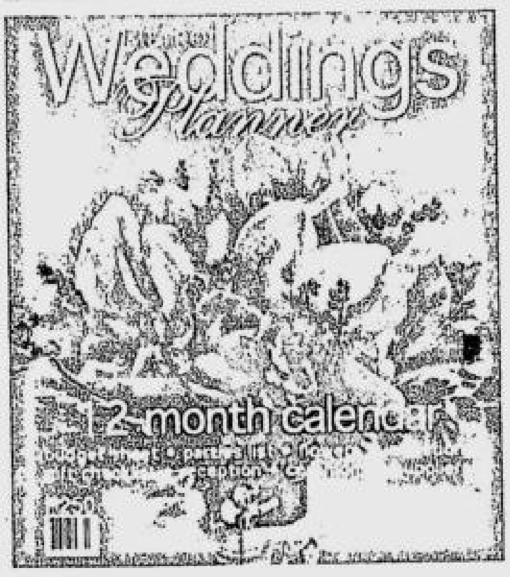

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METRO Magazine's much-awaited annual Body Calendar features Judy Ann Santos, Rafael Rosell, Anne Curtis, Jay-R, Aubrey Miles and other sexy celebrities. Photographer is Ronnie Salvacion.

Also in this issue: unusual holiday getaways from Badian Island to the Great Barrier Reef; renowned dermatologist Dr. Howard Murad talks about treating cellulite through proper nutrition; fashion spread on sensuous velvet; former model Joyce Oreña talks candidly about her new life and new love after personal upheaval; and the historic fashion show of Ferragamo in the Forbidden City in Beijing.

Working Mom magazine gives women ideas on how to earn P10,000 extra in only three hours, look for great gifts that cost only P100, and learn 10 tricks to get that promotion in the office next year. Aga Muhlach and Charlene Gonzalez grace the cover.

Chalk Magazine releases its annual list of the 50 Hottest Guys of '05: "Pinoy Big Brother's" Sam Milby leads the pack of hotties, including Richard Gutierrez, Jericho Rosales and Rafael Rosell.

Pink, every girl's guide to shopping, is now your ultimate prom bible! Multi-talented Iya Villania (featured with racer cutie Matteo Guidicelli) shows you how to be the belle of the ball in the 196-page ultra-luxe prom special.

Finally, Metro Him presents a wider range of men's fashion in the Philippines; from global glamour suits to cool sportswear in this month's issue with model and celebrity endorser Rafael Rosell on the cover.

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4160 Series of 2005

John Robert Powers holds talent showcase

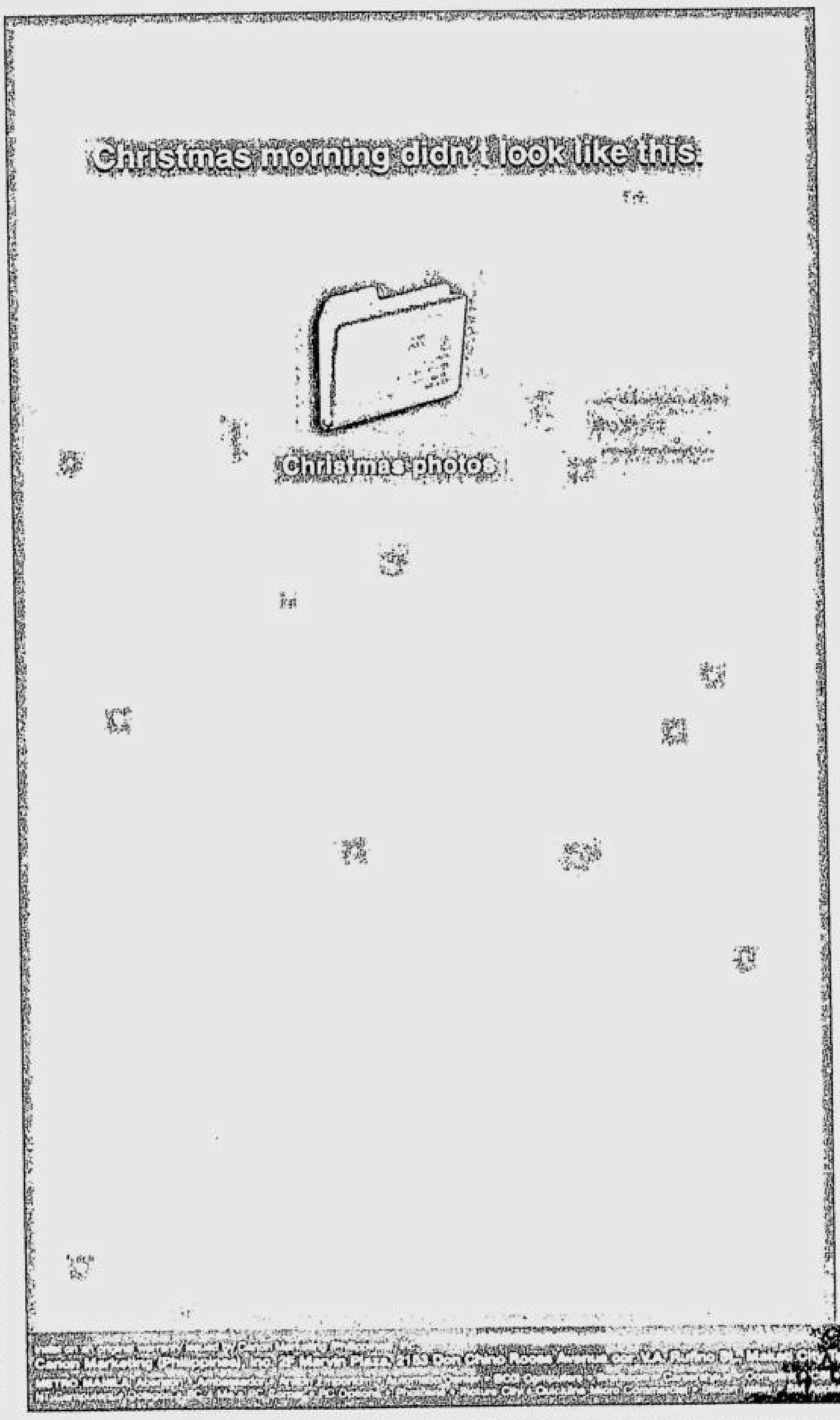
JOHN ROBERT Powers will present 80 students in a talent show called "Seasons" on Dec. 15, 6 p.m., in the Don Carlos P. Romulo auditorium at the RCBC Building on Gen. Puyat Ave. Talent managers and advertising executives will be invited to the show.

This year-end showcase will feature hosting, run way, fashion print, TV commercial, acting, singing and dancing.

John Robert Powers teaches basic personality development, a 10-session workshop designed to facilitate the development of the overt and covert components of personality. This level focuses on self-concept and personal values.

Other courses include integrated image-enhancement, skills-integration and development workshop and celebrity and executive program.

Some successful JRP graduates are Bb. Pilipinas Universe 2002 Karen Agustin; actor Yul Servo; Paolo Ballesteros, actor, TV host and model; singer Sean Lim; recording artist Sarah Geronimo; actor Cogie Domingo; singer Erick Santos; singer Frenchie Dy; actress Diana Zubiri, band lead singer Nyoy Volante and singer Kyla. Call 8929511.



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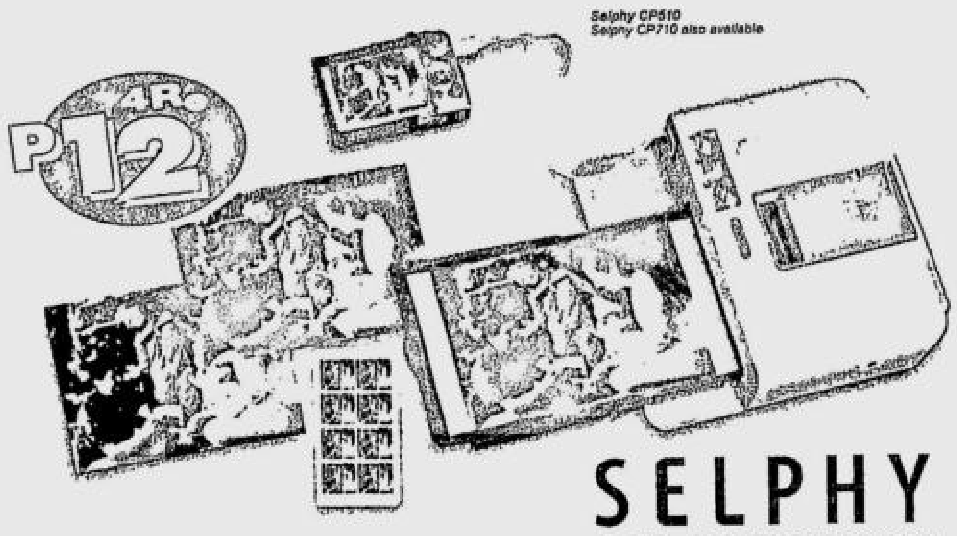

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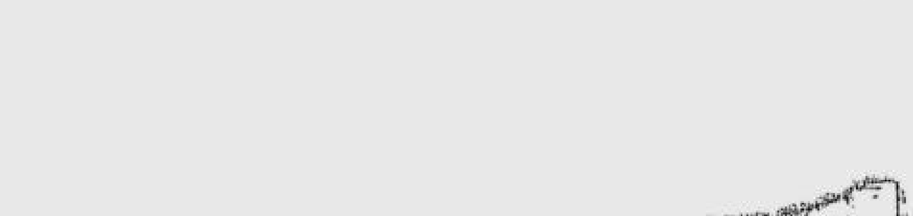

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Do you need hip-knee surgery?

By Amadís Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

"Understanding Total Joint Replacement: The HIP and the KNEE"
By José Fernando C. Syquia, M.D.
UST Publishing House
2005, 91 pages

DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN THAT former chief of state, Joseph Estrada, had a dysfunctional knee giving him excruciating pain, and he demanded to go abroad so he could have a surgical operation to have it replaced?

The authorities stood fast, and declared he could very well undergo the operation here. But, Erap being Erap, a compromise was reached: He was allowed to have his knee replaced in Hong Kong by his own physician, Christopher S. Mow.

Dr. Mow happens to be a mentor of Dr. José Fernando C. Syquia, author of the book under review. In fact, Mow wrote the foreword to this book, launched and one of the 400 titles to be published by the University of Santo Tomas by 2011, which marks the university's 400th anniversary.

Syquia is a magna cum laude graduate of the UST School of Medicine and a member of its faculty of Medicine and Surgery; he took his post-residency training in Joint Replacement Surgery at the Stanford University Medical Center in California, USA.

Like everything else connected with Estrada, the flap over his knee was news. "People became intrigued," recalls Syquia in an interview. "Some became afraid, others don't know the risks." There was a need to inform laypersons about the procedure to replace one's hip or knee with an artificial joint, its benefits and risks, and to answer questions they may have. This book, which is easy-reading and filled with color illustrations, fills that need.

"In the US, there are many handouts on hip and knee replacement," notes the surgeon. "But there are none here. In the States there are 500,000 to 700,000 surgeries of this kind. *Sa atin* (here) it's about 2,000."

The book discusses signs and symptoms, reasons for having a hip or a knee totally replaced, when to undergo the procedure, benefits, risks and possible complications; preparing for the surgery, recovering from the procedure, and other pertinent details.

Syquia resorts to an analogy: "Suppose you bought a car because the salesman just told you all the good points. Later, it turns out you have to replace everything. I would know my options if I was better informed. The same with the operation. Patients should know what they're getting into. The procedure is 95 percent successful."

The symptoms are pain (*rayuma* or arthritis) in the hip or knee which becomes worse, does not respond to therapy, and limits a person's motion or lifestyle. The risks of the procedure are blood clot, infection and the artificial parts wearing out in time. The artificial joints are good for 20 years, which is why the procedure is normally for older persons (60+).

"With the younger persons, the artificial joints will have to be replaced in time," Syquia observes. "The more wear and tear, the shorter the life span of the new joint."

The main benefit of a hip or knee replacement, the surgeon points out, "is that with a successful joint the patients can resume their normal life and do what they want. It can make a difference in the quality of life."

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New UST titles

THE UST PUBLISHING HOUSE (USTPH) WILL release its second and last set of titles for the year today at 10 a.m. at the Thomas Aquinas Research Complex. The book launch completes the projected 40 titles this year. Under its "400 Books at 400" program, the USTPH has been producing at least 40 titles a year since 2001 until 2011 when UST, Asia's oldest university, marks its 400th year.

The titles to be launched are:

Theology and ethics. "On the Road with San Lorenzo Ruiz" by Fr. Erno Diaz, and "Bioethics for Students" by Angeles Tan Alora, M.D.

Literature. "Dalawang Villanueva" by Rene Villanueva; "Bayan at Lipunan" by Bienvenido Lumbera; "Mga Talinghaga sa Laylayan" by Elizabeth Morales-Nuncio; "Calvary Road" by Abdon Balde Jr.; "Luto, Linis, Laba" by Alfred Yuson; and "Quantum Fluctuations" by A.F.V. Serrano.

Culture and history. "History of the Bisayan People, Vol. 3" by Fr. Cantius Kobak, O.F.M., and Fr. Lucio Gutierrez, O.P.; "Lonely Sentinels of the Sea" by Manuel Maximo Noche; "Mga Natatanging Anak ng Paete" by Cornelio Africano; "When the World Loved the Filipinos" by Luis Camara Dery; "The Samals in History and Legend" by Margarita Cojuangco; and "Angono 8, 9 and 10" by Ligaya Tiamson-Rubin.

Political science. "Perspectives in Politics: Public and Foreign" by José David Lapuz.

Nick Hornby . . .

From page F1

mouthed and wisecracking girl hung up over some guy named Chas. And finally, there's the pizza-delivering JJ, an American ex-vocalist of the rock band that should have been big but wasn't.

The four characters, all strange and screwed up in their own right, then get down from the roof and come face to face with each other's lives as they all try to make sense of the evening. "Down" then goes on to see the Toppers' House Gang reunite six weeks after the aborted jump. The uneasy friends find their own connection to each other becoming the dowsing rod for their continued wish to live. From the ridiculous (the four claiming they saw an angel on the roof to make some money) to the tragic (they reunite on the roof in time to witness someone else's suicide), the Toppers' House Four can't quite catch the proper break.

Dry wit

All this is told with the dry line of wit with the outbursts of outraged, humorous observations that people have come to expect from Hornby. But "Down" is more reserved than his previous stuff, to the point of being quite somber, as Martin explains: "We may not have been counting on anyone to rescue us, but once we started bumping into each other, there was certainly a collective desire—a desire born more than anything out of embarrassment—to shelve the whole idea, at least for the night. Not one of us descended those stairs having come to the conclusion that life was a beautiful and a precious thing; if anything, we were slightly more miserable on the way down than on the way up."

Part of the book's arsenal is a modern sense of angst: "The trouble with my generation is that we all think we're f__king geniuses. Making something isn't good enough for us, and neither is selling something, or teaching something, or even just doing something; we have to be something. It's our inalienable right as citizens of the twenty-first century." But to the Toppers' House Four, a group as unlikely as the appropriated name is fulsome, it's about much less than that.

It is a parade of personal apocalypses, of the ends of four very small worlds as they've come to know it with Hornby the unlikely doomsayer. There is a bleakness here, a weariness that hasn't been in Hornby's work before. It is, as he reminds, "Hard is trying to rebuild yourself, piece by piece, with no instruction book, and no clue as to where all the important bits are supposed to go."

"Down" shuffles down to its conclusion amid a gallery of awkward encounters leading to the world's worst intervention session. Unlike the other Honrby books, there's no expected redemption here, and, while the lessons are well said and heartily dispensed, the book limps to its end. Nick Hornby's observations remain razor-sharp, his jokes still ingenious, yet the laughter never reaches the characters. "A Long Way Down" is a downer for the modern reader, a pessimistic portrait of ordinary people with extraordinary pain.

Available in hardcover at National Book Store and PowerBooks.

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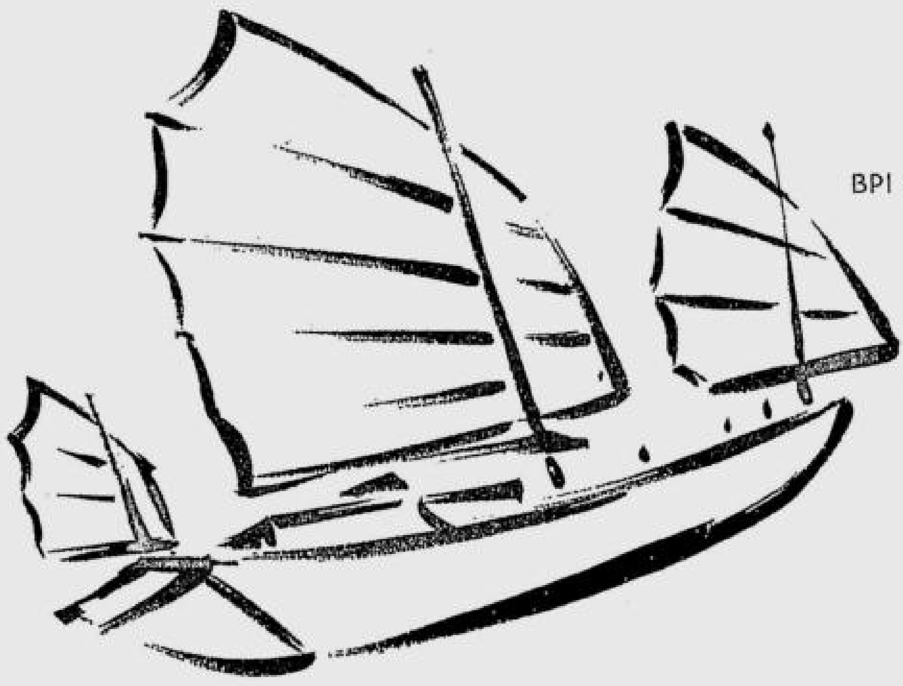

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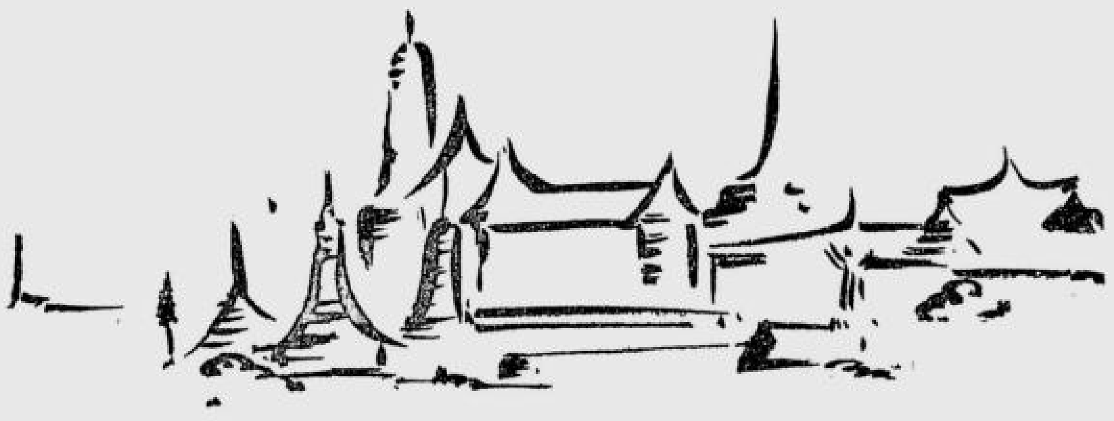

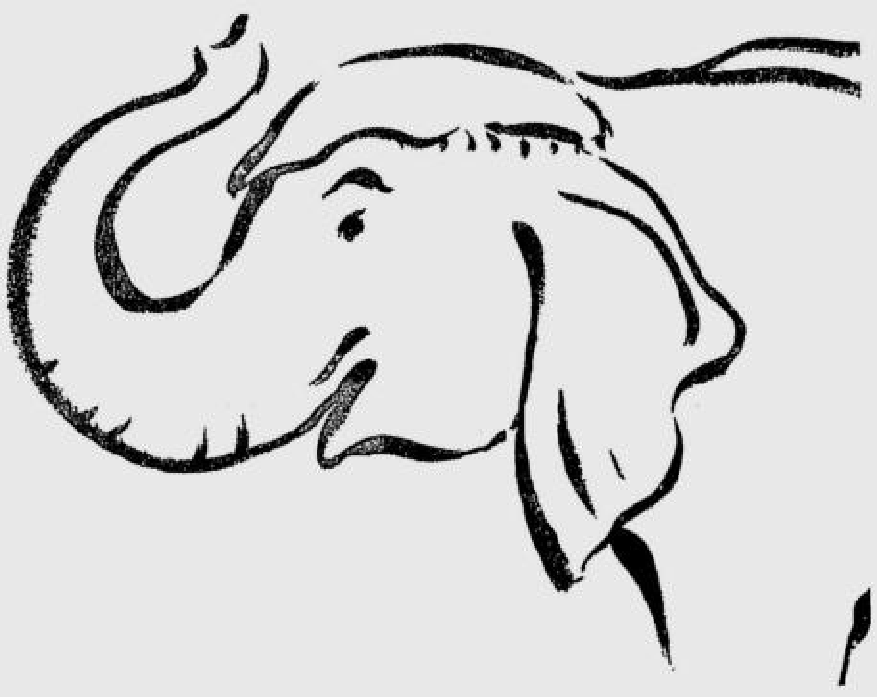

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Jane Villacrusis, Singapore trip winner

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